AN OUTLINE OF MODERN PAINTING

London, Tate Gallery

MAURICE UTRILLO: Place Du Tertre

AN OUTLINE OF
MODERN PAINTING
IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

WITH 150 ILLUSTRATIONS OF WHICH
16 ARE IN COLOUR

by

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PREFACE

IT is impossible to tie up all the loose ends of an unfinished story, or to achieve even the semblance of finality without arriving at a full stop. All I have been able to attempt is the sorting out of what seems to me to be the essential threads of development in the art of painting during the past hundred years or so, to set the warp on the loom, so to speak, and to give a general and tentative outline of the pattern of which it is the foundation. The only consolation for such an incomplete work is that it is a necessary preliminary to weaving a coherent picture of the progress of the art, such as a more distant view will eventually afford.

So record rather than criticism has been my aim throughout. In that record, doubtless the sins of omission are legion: I can only hope that those of inclusion are fewer; and if I have seemed to give to American painting a greater proportion of space in this small book than is wholly warranted by its international importance, it has been done because, for want of any European publication on the subject, the degree of that international importance has been impossible to estimate hitherto.

In short, I am sadly conscious of all the shortcomings that the critics are going to discover in this book, and of a good many more which I hope they will not find; and I wrote it because I felt that it ought to be written, if only as a historical introduction to the thousand-and-one books of criticism, and the still more numerous books, articles and reviews of praise and blame (in which criticism is generally wholly to seek) which assail a public willing to be interested in modern painting, but bewildered by the multitude of counsel.

In the few instances in which I have attempted not merely to record, but to appraise, some will find me too indulgent towards 19th-century endeavour, others, too tolerant of modern experiments and eccentricity. To these I can only answer, "A plague o' both your houses"—and if they go on to say that I have sacrificed profundity to speed of narrative, and width of scope to compression, I can only hope

that there will be found some to quote Mercutio again, and to say that " 'Tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door, but 'twill serve."

S. C. KAINES SMITH.

Birmingham, 1931.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Munich	Alte Pinacothek	*Birmingham*	City Museum and Art Gallery
N.G.	National Gallery, London	*Boston*	Museum of Fine Arts
N.P.G.	National Portrait Gallery, London	*Edinburgh*	National Gallery of Scotland
Tate	National Gallery of British Art, Millbank	*Louvre*	The Louvre, Paris

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CHAPTER I

THE FRENCH SCHOOL

THE growth of English painting from small beginnings to a place of its own in the history of European art is one of the most remarkable incidents in that history. Two hundred years ago there was scarcely any distinctively English painting worthy of the name; the narrow limitations of the Englishman's knowledge of the art outside his own shores put him at the mercy of such foreign practitioners as found it worth their while to make a living by painting portraits of English men and women, and England in the 17th century was the Tom Tiddler's ground of Flemish, Dutch and German invaders. The last thing that seemed likely to happen was that an Englishman should ever give to Europe a new starting point and a new inspiration in the art of painting, still less that, in one short century, England should have built up a national art of her own.

Yet the miracle happened, and in less than half a century, Hogarth had made painting the vehicle of that intimate social, political and moral commentary upon contemporary manners which has ever been dear to the English mind; Reynolds had found the means, in his Italian studies, to control the sense of colour which was his natural heritage, and to press it into the service of a new portraiture based upon a psychological rather than a decorative viewpoint; Gainsborough had evolved a method without precedent, of capturing the elusive charm of human personality and the still more mobile beauty of the English climate; and Wilson had rescued landscape painting from the clutches of the "grand manner," without sacrificing anything of the nobility and luminous space of Claude le Lorrain. Yet a little longer, and the English water-colourists had created a new art from the humble beginnings of their trade of topographical drawing. With no tradition to hamper them, and everything to discover with regard to the possibilities of their medium, Cozens, Sandby, and Girtin, step by step evolved the means to record beauties by landscape that

had lain beyond the scope of all their predecessors in all lands.

By the time the century was ended, England, isolated by the flood of war from contact with her neighbours, had built up an art that owed little to any foreign teacher. At the end of the first quarter of the 19th century, when that flood died down, English landscape painters had established their own art, almost in secret ; and, perhaps because of this segregation in its childhood, it was an art that knew little or nothing of laws or traditions, and each man among its exponents was a law unto himself even in his own country. Crome, at Norwich, had painted landscapes for his pleasure in the intervals of his work as a drawing master, and when he died in 1821, he could leave behind him no rule of painting for his followers, for his own rule had been inspired by love of the thing he painted, and by the keen vision of his own eyes for natural beauty. Then and later Constable, in his Essex fields, was translating into paint the sparkle of rain in trees and the procession of windy skies, in open rebellion against all rules of painting, all formulæ of composition, by a method which could but be his own, for he knew nothing of any other till after he had found his own way to the truth as he saw it. Turner, after his long apprenticeship of topographical drudgery, was standing at last with one foot in the Piazza di San Marco and the other in fairyland. Cotman was finding, in Norfolk and in Normandy, an austere and patterned beauty that never before had been captured and recorded in any medium or in any land. English art, in short, had reached the summit of national expression, untouched and almost untaught by foreign influence.

Yet almost every one of these national pioneers had had to fight his own battle against tradition. Hogarth, in the opinion of his contemporaries, had degraded painting by bringing it down to the record of common things; Reynolds' work was "not like Kneller." Gainsborough had sought relief from the dreary round of portrait painting in a landscape art which obeyed no rules, and had quarrelled with critics and colleagues alike all his life. Wilson, though he prospered in Rome side by side with the great Vernet,

could make no headway in England, and had to wait for his fame the full hundred years that Dr. Wolcot warned him would be his artistic purgatorial probation. Crome was, to the outer world and to the academic autocrat, Joseph Farington, an obscure provincial painting uninspired transcripts of his native Norfolk. Girtin passed almost unnoticed except as a somewhat unconventional topographer. Cotman was a struggling drawing master. Turner only made his way when he had shaken off, by notable achievement in oil-painting, the stigma of the mere water-colourist. Constable himself, impatient of academic discipline, was a mere self-taught daubster to those few who observed his earlier efforts to transfer to canvas the freshness and vigour of colour and light in his native county, regardless of the glib and lightly founded "traditions" of the English landscape school: and it was left to a shrewd French visitor to the Academy of 1823 to grasp the tremendous significance of his work, to buy the *Hay Wain*, and to exhibit it the following year in Paris, where it gained the gold medal of the year, and set the Seine on fire.

It was into strange company that this jewel of English rain and sunshine had come: for the long blight of revolution and war had wrought, violently and with havoc, changes in French art equal to those which had been more slowly and more peacefully effected in England. When the French Revolution chased Fragonard into retirement and Greuze into obscurity, and wrecked the whole pretty fabric of artificiality on which the art of Watteau and Lancret, Boucher and Nattier had rested, there had survived a few whose work had bridged the deepest of the gulf between the old and the new order. Of these, the most notable and the noblest was Chardin, who even in the days before the chaos, had touched the fringe of reality in his simple and homely interior scenes taken from the lives of humble folk, and in whose later still-life compositions there remains that monumental quality which is, when all is said and done, the abiding characteristic of all that is best in French art. Yet he transmitted nothing, for the harsh national discipline which alone could uplift France from

the confusion into which the excesses of the Revolution had plunged her, left no room for such frivolities as human feeling and the enjoyment of the greatness in little things.

Louis David (1748–1825), the painter who emerged from Revolution into Empire, and passed into exile with the eclipse of his idol Napoleon, had set the yoke of severe and self-conscious classicism firmly upon the neck of French art; and when he himself was no longer present to enforce its laws, he left behind him Gros and Ingres to carry on the tradition. Gros, though he was as unswerving a classicist as David himself, had a large tolerance for the romantic and realistic instincts of younger men, and it was he who encouraged his pupil Bonington to pursue his natural bent for the painting of landscape as aerial in space, and as swift in observation, as it is balanced in composition and firm in handling; and he was the master of Delaroche.

J. A. D. Ingres (1770–1867), for all his purity of line and restraint in colour, and despite the sculptured delicacy of his modelling, was a romanticist at heart, and his most uncompromisingly "correct" official portraits, such as that of the Duc d'Orleans at Versailles, have a disconcerting vitality which belies the severity of their style. The famous *Source*, too, is no mere symbolic figure, whatever its painter's conscious intention may have been. Realism intrudes, however timidly, into its careful unreality, and makes its appeal emotional rather than purely aesthetic, personal rather than ideal; and this is a work of his old age, painted when he was seventy-six; even a lifelong devotion to Raphael and "the divine Greeks" had but served to intensify that romantic element in his mental make-up, which had shown itself timidly forty years before in his *Apotheosis of Homer*.

Already at that time the battle-pieces of Horace Vernet (1789–1863) were throwing off the trammels of formality, and becoming only slightly glorified transcripts of fact. In the year of "Constable's Salon," Vernet was at the summit of his popularity, and though he had had to fight hard for recognition, this was due to political, not to aesthetic considerations; the way of a Bonapartist in 1824 was hard.

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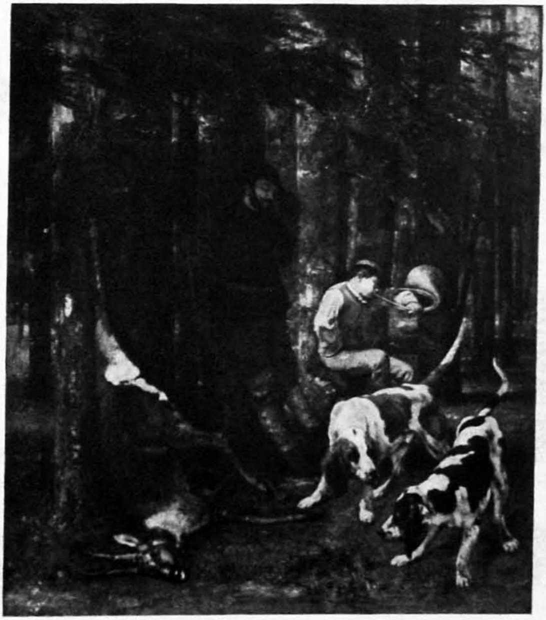
COROT : Le Moulin



GUSTAVE COURBET : La Curée (The Quarry)

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EDGAR DEGAS : La Danseuse au bouquet saluant sur la scéne (pastel)

EDGAR DEGAS : Le Foyer de la danse (pastel)

But a dozen years later he was the official battle-painter to Louis XVIII at Versailles, where his vast canvases record the campaigns of Africa and the siege of Antwerp, and in these romantic realism is completely triumphant, though conveyed by means of composition and drawing as severe as that of any classic painter.

But Vernet was simply part of his times; it was Géricault who created the romantic world from which Vernet took his point of view: and the year of Constable's welcome in Paris was that of Géricault's premature death. Although he was the true creator of romanticism in painting, he was in fact the greatest classic of them all. His picture of a charging *chasseur* in the Salon of 1812 had shocked David, for whom it was too near to actuality; but he was a devoted admirer of Gros, who, while keeping his realistic tendencies in check, equipped him the better to give expression to them in ordered composition and pure draftsmanship; and it was to Rome and to Michelangelo that he turned for the completion of his training, and for freedom to turn it to his own account. Thus, though he shocked the rigid classicists in 1819 with the terrible realism of his *Rade de la Meduse*, that unflinching record of despair and agony and death, of contorted figures and livid flesh, piled on the tragic raft of the lost frigate, it can only have been by reason of the horror of this new realism that they overlooked its superbly monumental composition; and by a strange, but poetically just, anticipation of the sealing of Constable's genius by Paris in 1824, it was in England, whither Géricault took his picture in 1820, that his imaginative and dramatic power was first given the recognition he deserved.

His colour is subdued, and his use of opposed light and shadow is emphatic; his realism is uncompromising, and he made his studies of the dead and dying for his *Meduse* in the hospitals of Paris, that no whit of truth might escape him. He won the battle for romanticism, though he had learned his craft in the school of the severest of all exponents of the creed of classicism, David's pupil, Guérin; and he prepared the way for his friend Eugène Delacroix (1799–1863), whose *Massacre of Scio*, painted in the same

eventful year, 1824, so outraged Gros, from whose *Pestiférés de Jaffa* it was in some degree derived, that he said of it, "*The Massacre of Scio* is the massacre of Art," and abandoned his support of the pupil whose earlier effort, *The Barque of Dante*, the unconscious romantic element in him had approved.

Yet, for all its vigorous action and poignant feeling, the *Massacre* is nobly designed and as nobly drawn. Though it is colour, not form, that dominates the scheme, and is the key to the composition, there is but little sacrifice of the individual forms to the broader and less rigidly defined balance of colour. By the standards of his time he was not an accurate draftsman, but his (to us) insignificant distortions were deliberate, and designed for dramatic emphasis. His great achievements were the substitution of colour for form as the dominant factor in design, and of grandeur of emotional conception for the grand manner of declamatory narrative. It is as though Jean Jacques Rousseau had paraphrased Racine.

His *Execution of Marino Faliero* (Wallace Collection) suppresses the crudities of realistic representation, and yet, while exalting a terrible episode into a superb colour-design, retains the power to convey the instant impression of reality. Unfortunately his contemporaries and successors missed both the grandeur and the reality, and wallowed feebly in the slough of an uninspired "realism," which consisted in little more than a fussy accumulation of detailed imitation of objects, or the indulgence of an uncurbed sentimentalism. Of the latter, no Frenchman was guilty, but the half-German, half-Dutch Ary Scheffer gave it full play. His *St. Monica* (National Gallery) is a terrible example of what can be done with good drawing and carefully arranged colour when they are bestowed upon an incorrigible sentimentalist, from whom the restraints of classic dignity have been withdrawn. At the other extreme, the wearisome historical puppet shows of Paul Delaroche (1797–1886), such as the *Death of Queen Elizabeth* (1827), in the Louvre, show how puerile a thing romanticism without romance can become. In a very different category was

Alexandre Gabriel Decamps (1803–1860), for in his work we find a logical progression from the point reached by Delacroix, in the construction of a composition on the basis rather of colour-distribution than form; for on this substructure Decamps built up his more emotional, because more directly observed, compositions, and introduced into them a freedom of drawing, and a dominance of light as the controlling factor, which paved the way for the impressionism of a later day. He shared with Paul Huet the first French adventures into the domain of naturalistic landscape, and it was in his search for scenes in which sunlight was patently the master of everything else that he first came into contact with the Oriental subjects for which he gained both fame and popularity. A countryman by instinct and early training, and a Parisian by birth and in quickness of wit and perception, he had a great admiration for the Barbizon painters, and especially for Millet, which seems strangely at variance with his emotional liveliness streaked with satire: but he had not the strength of purpose to pursue a bent which might have placed him among the pioneers, and some years before his death, abandoned painting, torn between his own instinct in the direction of interpretative naturalism and his reverence for the classical tradition represented by Ingres.

Of course, it was the subject-matter rather than the real value of the work of Delacroix, Vernet and Decamps that found profuse imitation, and a host of producers of Oriental futilities followed in their train. The double curse of French painting has always been subject and skill. It is unfortunately impossible to say that Marilhat and Benjamin-Constant were bad painters; but it is equally impossible to say that what they painted matters to anybody, or that it ever would have mattered if they had not specialized in some popular subject, which, in their case, happened to be that of the Orient. Histories of French painting fall with fatal ease into a classification by subject, and the Orientalists share the honours of popularity with the military painters in the period between, roughly, 1830 and 1870, side by side with the painters of classical subjects, genre, and history. Portrait-painting stands somewhat apart, for the official

standing of painting, and the official character of its recognition made it a less personal relation between the painter and the private client than it was in England, for example. In a sense, there were no portrait-painters, for when a man had been through the mill of a classical training, he was supposed to be able to paint a portrait, and if he had not done so, he did not get the chance to try. In fact, the greatest loss sustained by French art, through the Revolution, was the passing of the individual patron, who had at least served to keep painters in touch with humanity, and had given individuality some chance in the battle against the tyranny of academic conservatism.

So the uninspired and uninspiring procession pursued its steady course, with here and there an outstanding figure, followed by his group of imitators: Meissonier (1815–1891), who, purely as a craftsman, doubtless earned the extravagant admiration which his little pictures of historical genre gained for him right down to the end of the 19th century, was the spiritual heir of Delaroche rather than of Delacroix, though he seldom sinks to the same disastrous level of elaborate banality. He was to some extent saved from such a fate by his Napoleonic subjects, which were near enough and real enough both to him and his public to inspire him and them with something of conviction and genuineness of sentiment: but his purely genre subjects, in the "fancy dress" of the 17th and 18th centuries, are only very well executed and designed illustrations of trivial human action, with none of the freshness of direct observation which makes the work of the little Dutch masters, their only prototype, a real and valuable landmark in the history of painting.

Indeed, it must be admitted that in France, as in every other country, the only real progress in the art of painting, as apart from the craft of representation, has been made in despite of academic and of popular discouragement. We have so long taken France for granted as the natural home of artistic innovation and progress, that we forget how long is the interval between each actual step forward and its perception by the critics, to say nothing of the general

EDGAR DEGAS: Jeunes Spartiates s'exerçant a la Lutte

public, and fail to realize that the main body of French painting has always been, and is, academic and conservative, popular in appeal and relying on an alliance of craftsmanship and sentiment rather than upon truthful and personal expression or upon truly aesthetic values ; and to this day each succeeding Salon displays a vast output of machine-made excellence in whose midst the intrusion of a picture by Manet would strike a note of startling modernity, though Manet has been dead and gone these fifty years and more.

The painters who have made the enlargement of the scope of painting possible are those who have broken out of the ranks of the academic procession to seek their own goal, and because of the obstacles placed in their way they have often been aggressive; what was really no more than evolution has therefore been dubbed revolution, and the misnomer has flattered those to whom it was applied. Yet by no means all those who have broken away from tradition have possessed genius, nor have all those who have held to the academic path been lacking in inspiration. Consequently there are two parallel courses of development to be traced by the historian of French painting, the one, that which without deviating from the academic path, follows it to its logical conclusion, and the other, that which has penetrated into new fields, to make new discoveries and court new difficulties. At first, each new group that breaks away towards the Left, does so violently, and seeks complete detachment, but gradually the gap closes, and, while the Left remains the Left and the Right the Right, the two are linked by many intermediate grades, and so present as a whole a widened and unbroken front, like a column deploying to the left, over-eagerly, and gradually regaining touch. On the extreme right the classicist Gleyre, who was Whistler's first master in Paris, marches rigidly. Gérôme (1824) is close beside him, using the classic means to achieve the purposes of romantic genre, with a cleanliness of craftsmanship that has no doubts, and indulges in no experiments, unless it be in forcing to their utmost the capacities of academic skill to render the most difficult problems of foreshortening, as in his *Death of Julius*

Cæsar, or straining academic reserve by the melodrama of his *Christiani ad Leones*, and by the anecdotal detail of his *Eminence Grise.* His sense of compositional balance, in the true academic tradition, is so sure that it condones the excessive detail and overstudied variety of much of his work; but his lack of fire and his mechanical dexterity mark him as an uninspired follower of David in spirit. Bouguereau has a greater sympathy with his subject as such, a broader and softer disposition of the masses of colour, and, as a sentimentally religious painter, occasionally strikes a note of real sincerity, kept well in hand by an exaggerated respect for manual skill and narrow formulæ. Compared with these, Couture (1815–1879) is a rough recruit, marching in the classic line, but out of step. His *Decadence of the Romans* (1847) is classical in the purity of its drawing, romantic in the disposition of the colour-scheme, and almost realistic in its emphasis of characterisation. Its appeal is rather emotional than either dramatic or aesthetic; unconsciously, Couture was inclined to realism; consciously, he was a grandiose classicist. His satire on Courbet betrays at once both his conscious and his unconscious aim, for his *Pupil of Courbet* seated on a bust of Alexander the Great, with a cabbage for a model, is painted with a realism and a breadth almost such as Courbet might have taught him.

These were the drawing-masters, the craftsmen who could communicate all they knew because very little of what they knew was really part of themselves—skilful painters expressing little or nothing more than their love of skill.

But that the classic art of David and Ingres was not as lifeless a thing as the work of Gérôme would lead us to believe, two remarkable figures stand to prove. These are Chassériau (1819–1856) and Puvis de Chavannes (1824–1898). Although Chassériau was only 37 when he died, he left behind him a great body of work, in portraiture and in decoration. His portraits have that fine quality of purity in line and form which we have seen also in the work of his first master, Ingres, such as the latter's portrait of Mme de Sennonnes in the Nantes Museum, but touched

with a kind of inward fire all his own. His *Deux Sœurs* in the Louvre is a picture that for all its statuesque quietude is ablaze with vitality, a feverish and suppressed vitality not without its note of tragedy, and even the classic calm of his *Venus by the Sea* cannot altogether stifle the strong undertone of passion that inspires it. Like so many short-lived painters, Chassériau expressed an intense love of life, and filled the cold forms of classic art with the warmth of his own palpitating personality.

Far otherwise, Puvis de Chavannes, as though conscious of a long life before him, gave to classic art, by stripping it of the pretence of actuality, an abstract vitality expressive of his own quiet sensibility. To him, form, and especially the human form, was the vehicle for the suggestion of a spiritual state or an abstract idea. Colour was suppressed till it became a mere echo of itself, and an intense yet subdued luminosity (not light) raised the key of his painting to an ethereal note. His pictures are like clear-cut memories rather than material representations of human beings in landscape. They have a hieratic stillness that almost approaches to stiffness, and the resultant symbolic character of his work is so plain to see, so simple to understand, that it makes its appeal as much to the most literal as to the most complex mind. Thus he was a born painter of mural decorations, and was fortunate in finding this outlet for his peculiar style, which is a blend of elements that, except in the hands of genius, must have been wholly irreconcilable—to wit, the Gothic liveliness of Giotto and the classic severity of David, whose only common characteristic is that of an austere economy of means. In his *Martyrdom of St. Denis*, or his *Life of St. Génévièe* spiritual grandeur and severity of design are combined in mutually expressive alliance.

Like Géricault, and like Delacroix, in their faithful adherence to the monumental aspect of painting, but utterly unlike them in their individual application of its traditional laws, these two painters, whose superficial affinity with one another resolves itself, on examination, into a common power to express themselves completely even under the

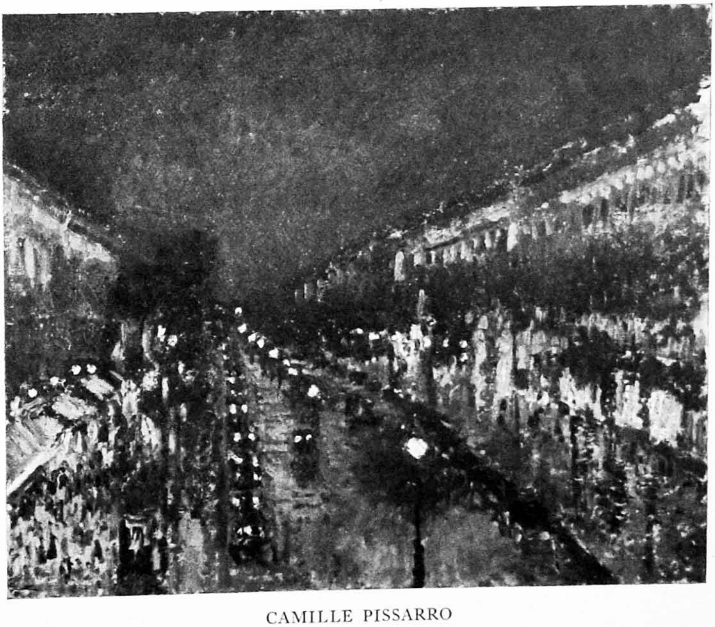
severe restraint of an art based upon the forms of idealism, at once mastered and perpetuated the severe classical tradition. Theirs was the romanticism of a real renaissance, a glowing, growing art, whose severity of form merely emphasizes its intense reality of feeling. They rejected nothing of the past. Puvis de Chavannes' *Le Repos*, at Amiens, does not disguise its debt to Poussin, and his *St. Généviève watching over the Sleeping City* has all the quiet intensity of Fra Angelico. It was an art that should have had a future, but these were its only exponents, and it stands as an isolated phenomenon in the art of 19th-century France; for those who might have carried it on succumbed to the dominance of a classicism which, for them, had degenerated into a collection of arbitrary rules. They were little men, and their art is a belittling of great subjects to their own stature, and the dressing up of little subjects in trappings too big for them. It is not to be wondered at that real men with real feelings became impatient of the restraints of what was no longer a tradition, but merely a fashion.

The seeds of revolt had long since been sown at "Constable's Salon" in 1824. Coming from abroad, the unorthodoxy of the English painter implied no flouting of French classicism. It was, to French critics and painters alike, a foreign and somewhat barbaric treatment of an aspect of the natural world for which no strict rules had ever been formulated, and so could not be violated, and to them it was justified by its obvious success in achieving its object. But, so far as the Jury of the Salons was concerned, this English landscape art was a curiosity rather than a legitimate art, as the French painters who succumbed to its fascination found to their cost. Paul Huet (1804–1869), who at the age of twenty-three was the first to essay a revival of French landscape painting, followed close enough upon the heels of the momentary fashion for Constable, and at the same time was sufficiently reminiscent of Claude le Lorrain and of C. J. Vernet, to ensure a favourable reception; but as soon as the established order realized the swift strides that romanticism in landscape was making, and saw that the English

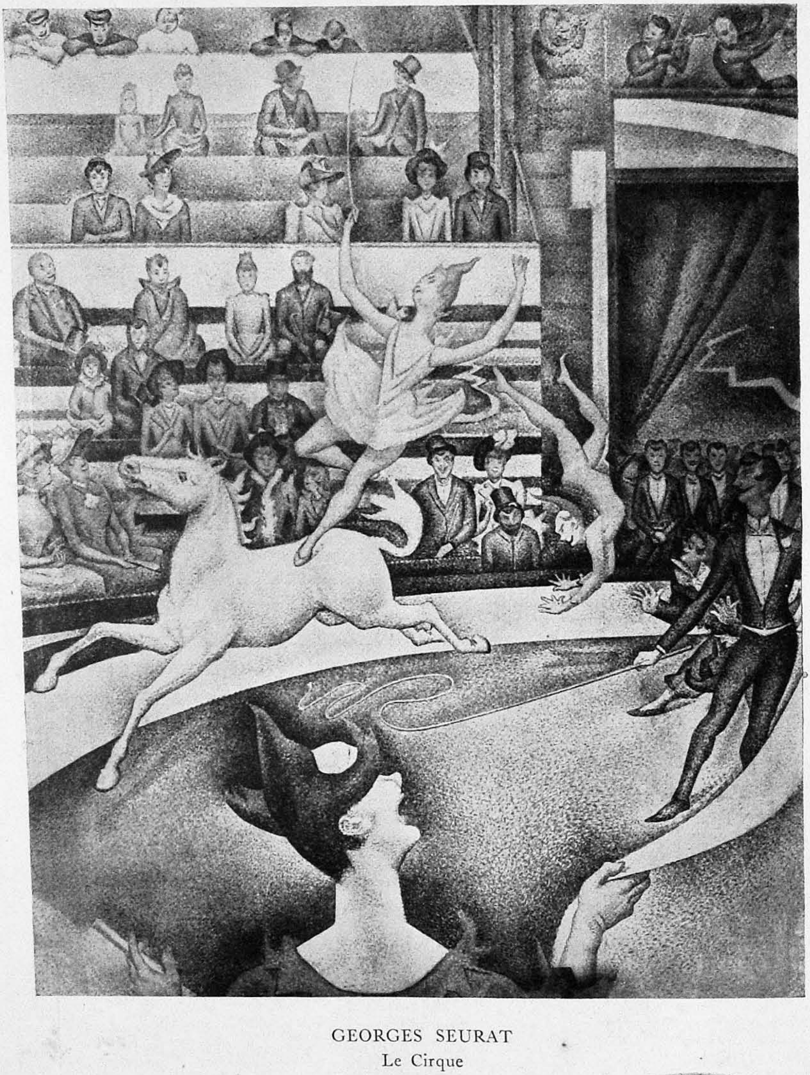
DHANAKOTI MUDALIAR
Date...............

By courtesy Messrs. Reid & Lefevre

HONORE DAUMIER
Au Théâtre Français



CAMILLE PISSARRO
Boulevard des Italiens



GEORGES SEURAT
Le Cirque

DHANAKOTI MUDALIAR
Date..................
LIBR[ARY]

virus was by way of becoming implanted in French art under their very noses, a sharp reaction took place. Though both Camille Corot (1796–1875) and Theodore Rousseau (1812–1867) exhibited at the Salon, the former from 1827 onwards, and the latter for the first time in 1834, the following year, 1835, brought Rousseau's representation there abruptly to a close for thirteen years. Corot's comparatively unobtrusive landscapes, with their mildly classical flavour—his first Salon pictures were Italian landscapes, a *View at Narni* and the *Campagna at Rome*—escaped this cruelly effective form of official censure, and he exhibited there without a break to the end of his life, but it was not till he was forty that he ever sold a picture, and he was sixty before he came into his own.

Both these men were landscape painters by instinct; but while Corot was also an accomplished figure painter, and a portraitist of rare sympathy and charm, to Rousseau landscape was the be-all and end-all of painting. As a boy of twelve he had made his first struggles towards his goal, with his *Sémaphore de Montmartre.* When, in 1831, he entered for the Prix de Rome, he had the hardihood to discard the set subject, *The finding of the body of Zenobia*, and to submit in its place *A View in Auvergne*, a pure landscape, unrelieved by so much as a building on its river-bank; by 1833 he had found the Forest of Fontainbleau, of which he was to become a lifelong devotee, and though in 1834 his *View in Auvergne* and a scene in the Forest of Compiègne were both hung in the Salon, and the latter won the approval of Ary Scheffer, the watchful eye of Bidault, the exponent of classic landscape, and President of the Academy, had observed the danger to his craft, and the next year brought the exclusion that was to last till 1848. It was a sad blow to a young and enthusiastic innovator, who, with the commendation of Ary Scheffer and Delacroix, and the patronage of the Duc d'Orleans, saw fame almost within his grasp: but it was a fortunate thing for French landscape painting; for it led to the quiet and persistent growth of an art, the common bond between a group of men of widely differing temperaments and points of view, the

art of self-interpretation in terms of natural beauty. Working side by side, each in his own way, at a distance from the clash of Parisian controversy, first Rousseau, then Corot, Millet, Diaz de la Peña, Daubigny, developed the gospel that Constable had discovered in like manner in the Essex meadows, which is just this, that unresisting, uncomplaining nature may be made the mirror of the soul. Here was a doctrine removed a thousand leagues from the formal precepts of the academic schools. That it could have gained by the approbation, while it was yet in the making, of a body whose very reason for existence was the imposition of rigid laws upon the practice of the art, is inconceivable, for its essence lies in its elasticity, its infinite adaptability to the temperamental needs of the individual: and as an art that is the reflexion of the artist's character can only reach maturity with the maturing of the character that it reflects, it was as right as it was inevitable that it should win its place but slowly, and that when it ultimately arrived, it should arrive with overwhelming certainty.

From the first there were those even among the more orthodox of the romantics, who recognized in the landscape of Rousseau the counterpart of their own efforts to infuse individuality into the dry bones of classic art. Scheffer and Delacroix have been noted, and Decamps came near to sharing the aims of the landscape painters, but failed to stay the course. There were not wanting critics who, as early as 1835, openly derided Bidault and upheld the young innovator; and these were the source of a steadily swelling stream of approval and encouragement which at length, in 1848, swept down the barriers; for when, in that year, the purely official constitution of the Salon jury gave way to a system in which the general body of artists had power of appointment, Rousseau, from complete exclusion, found himself translated suddenly to power, with a seat upon the hanging committee.

It was in the same year that he finally made his home at Barbizon, and his outlook upon his beloved forest, always tinged with an element of drama, became more forcible, more aggressive still, as though he now felt that he could at

last let himself go. In his earlier work, vigorous contrasts of light and dark, low-toned and heavily clouded skies, and powerfully focussed pivotal masses, were often mitigated in their defiance of tradition by the use of subdued though varied colour; but from 1848 onwards, green takes on a more vigorous assertiveness, brilliance of light is enhanced by sharpness of colour, and the broad masses are broken by a sparkling detail which reminds us of Gainsborough's earliest love, the *Wood Scene* in the National Gallery (925); and in his last years a note of gloom creeps into his work, with its restricted range of colour, and its almost Rembrandtesque emphasis of light and shade. The battle of romantic landscape was won. From the Salon Carré in 1864, Rousseau advanced to the Presidency of the French jury at the Exposition of 1867, and saw the first general recognition of Millet, the companion of his Barbizon retreat and sharer of his doctrines: and in the following year he died.

Although Corot shared with him the honours of having founded and sustained the Barbizon School, his temperament and his circumstances combined to produce a very different type of landscape. That two men so different from one another should be so closely linked in the history of painting speaks volumes for the strength of the bond of a common principle.

Corot has been too often regarded, in recent years, as the faithful slave of a sentimental aspect of natural landscape. The fact is, that, even if he had never met Rousseau, even if he had never seen Fontainebleau and Barbizon, he was already a very subtle and accomplished artist. His early glimpses of Italy, added to a sincere and reverent study of classic painting, developed in him a selective and constructive vision, which gives even to the gentlest of his misty landscapes a finality of form with which the most hidebound classicist could not quarrel. In his earliest work there is none of that dreamy quality, with its diffusion of light and halation of form, which is his most generally recognised characteristic to-day. Strong silhouette and firmly balanced foreground masses are combined with a remarkable

recession of distances in a composition in three dimensions, as precise in form as it is lacking in formality. It was only gradually, and in contact with the sincerity of Rousseau, that his own sincerity found its full outlet, and his work lost the last traces of self-conscious picture-making to become the unadulterated expression of his own gay, gentle, perhaps a litt e complacent personality. He was the most perfect master of his medium of all the Barbizon painters, and, perhaps, because success, in the financial and official sense, was not vitally necessary to him, he was able to preserve throughout the years that elapsed before he won the recognition that placed him in the forefront of the world's landscape painters, that ironic urbanity which redeemed him and his work from any charge of sentimentalism. To one who asked him, as he worked in the open, painting the scene that lay before him, why he had placed a tree where no tree was, he answered, " Ssh—it's a secret. Don't give it away. I put it there to please the birds."

So gentle a revolutionary could only win his cause by peaceful penetration; and he gained much, no doubt, by the continual hammering upon the gates of the citadel of Paris by his more aggressive companions of the open air. A little the oldest, and by far the richest of them all, he helped in his way towards the realization of the common cause of sincerity and of the right to personal and individual expressions, partly by holding his place year by year upon the Salon walls, and partly by those anonymous encouragements which the purchase of a work of Rousseau or Diaz or Millet by some unknown " American " brought to men in whom pride and starvation fought their battle through years of disappointment.

So complete was his triumph towards the end of his life that he earned the compliment of mass-produced forgery. He has had many imitators too, for his technical method, with its complete absence of affectation, and his colour-scale, with its severe submission to tonality, seem so easy to reproduce; it has been said that in his lifetime he produced some nine hundred pictures, of which not more than seven thousand have survived! But, even though he to some extent

PAUL GAUGUIN

Flowerpiece

DHANAKOTI MUDALIAR
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allowed himself to become fixed in his outlook upon nature, and so has earned the reputation of monotony, we have only to turn to his portraits of his wife, with their almost sombre dignity, or to the gay crispness of his studies of Parisian roofs and dormer windows, to realize that here was a painter who would have found and revealed some aspect—and each one different—of himself in any surroundings and in any subject that he chose to paint. But, being a lover of the open air, it was in the open air that he found the largest and most natural scope.

To establish beyond question the unity of aim, and variety of scope, of this remarkable school, we need but consider in detail the work of one other of its members, Jean François Millet (1814–1875), the one among them to whom humanity was the necessary complement of inanimate nature.

I suppose that if one were to call Millet the greatest classic painter of France, one would be regarded as slightly insane. Yet this peasant painter of peasants was nurtured on classic literature, and learned more from Virgil, from Michelangelo and from Poussin, than all the meagre instruction of Delaroche could teach him. Born at Gruchy of peasant folk, his ultimate artistic achievement was the flowering of these generations of the love of nature, and his parents vowed him to his art from the first. His earliest instruction was received from Langlois at Cherbourg, whence he went in 1837 with a meagre allowance from the town authorities to work in the studio of Delaroche, where, as was natural, he found little to help him on his way. Down to 1849, he painted mainly nudes, in which the influence of Correggio is not difficult to trace, and both in draftsmanship and in the handling of light and shade, arrived at that big mastery which suddenly found its natural scope in 1849, in the *Sower*, which remains one of his greatest achievements. The previous year had seen the production of the *Winnower*, its surprising attainment to the honour of the Salon Carré, and its immediate purchase by Ladru-Rollin. It was about this time that he met Diaz and Jacque, and when illness, poverty and the troubles of the Revolution drove him from

Paris, it was with Jacque that he went to Barbizon, and found a kindred spirit in Rousseau. It was here that he found, even in dire poverty, freedom of personal expression, and the *Sower*, the *Reaper*, and the *Gleaners*, the *Sawyers* and the *Angelus* are the outcome of this liberation of the soul. Of "the gay side of life," he said, "I do not know where it is." He "knows nothing which is not a direct impression from nature or from human forms." His outlook is sombre as his colour is sombre, it is not so much the dignity as the inevitability of toil that he expresses. For his peasants there is no release, no hope of relaxation or material reward. But for the underlying religious feeling, openly represented only in the *Angelus*, but symbolized rather than implied by the impression of ordered rhythm in all his work, the spiritual atmosphere of his art would be one of crushing gloom. For this reason, if for no other, we may not call him a realist, as Courbet was a realist; for though his pictures are "direct impressions from nature and from human forms," they are the impressions of one to whom the hopeless hardship of material life would have been intolerable but for compensations of spiritual hope. It is in this spiritual courage that Millet approaches so closely to Michelangelo, as it is in his instinctive power to tune the natural setting to the human mood that he recalls Poussin—the Poussin of the National Gallery *Phocion*. He is a classic, in short, not in David's fashion, by means of portraying men in the guise of ancient gods, but by means of suggesting the presence of God in the forms of modern men.

For the rest, Diaz, cheery, fiery, one-legged, with his splashed sunlight and gipsy figures in brakes of shadowy green; Jacque, with his sheep and goats and stables, that glow with the warm quiet colour of their kind; Daubigny, strong and quiet and luscious in colour as much in the painting of misty London river and its barges, as in the rendering of a forest glade: all these exemplify, each in his own way, the abiding principle of the romantic naturalism of Constable, that each man's outlook upon the world is his own, and that each one uses his craft aright in bending and twisting it to his peculiar and personal need: they were not

realists, for their creed was fundamentally subjective; but they paved the way for realism, because they came so closely into contact with nature that each one of them, without distortion or falsification of natural landscape, found his counterpart in some simple and obvious aspect of its beauty, that anyone could recognize as true.

An artist who might almost be described as the Barbizon master of marine painting was Eugène Boudin (1825–1873), who, as the son of a Honfluer pilot, was brought up in the surroundings of which he later became the brilliant exponent in paint. Boudin, although not to be described technically as an impressionist, produces by his light touch, and the high key of his work, an instantaneous impression of moving light, air and water, and his treatment of crowded ports and of the open sea has a crispness and freshness which is unrivalled by any but the Dutchman Jongkind, who was greatly influenced by him. His is a kind of unsophisticated naturalism which carries conviction at a glance, and is untouched by any controlling rule save that of the artist's own breezy personality.

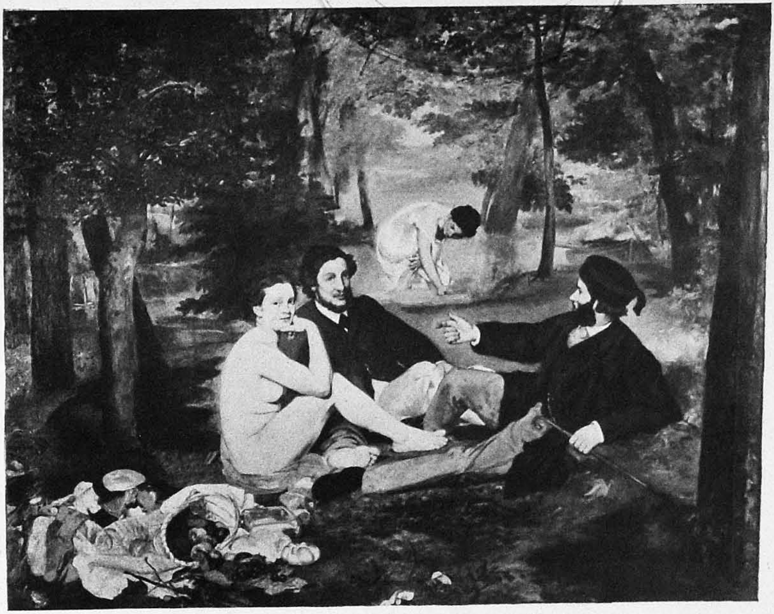
Nothing could be more different than the work of Boudin from all the sea painting in France which had preceded it, and yet it is impossible to say at what point it breaks with the tradition of its forerunners. He is, in fact, a more spontaneous painter than almost any other Frenchman, with the possible exception of Daubigny.

These men did not call themselves revolutionaries, and they sought to add to the scope of painting rather than to destroy the past and begin anew. That, in their patience and honesty, they achieved their aim is seen to-day, not only in the universal acceptance accorded to their work, but in the profound influence that they have had upon landscape painting in every corner of the world: but they were not alone, and while they worked out their destiny of romantic and subjective realism, a new battle-cry was beginning to shake the walls of the Salon, that of realism unalloyed.

Gustave Courbet was its protagonist, if not its originator: a noisy, defiant, flamboyant egotist who could not brook

that there should ever have been a painter before him, and whose whole life was a revolt not only against authority, but even against alliance. He had no nobility like that of Millet, to ennoble by his point of view the sordidness, the ugliness of labour and of poverty; no gentleness like Corot's, no gaiety like that of Diaz, only a relentlessly all-seeing eye, and the hand of an instinctive painter, to set down what he saw. The construction and the actual painting of his *Enterrement à Ornans*, which raised a storm of fury in the Salon of 1850, are superb. Its colour scheme, for all its sombreness, is infinitely subtle, balanced, true. But since these peasants are dull, coarse folk, dull and coarse let them be. Set them beside that other group of mourners, that other wall of black crowned with faces, that El Greco painted in the *Entierro del Conde de Orgaz*, and you can see how deliberately Courbet has shut his eyes to the inherent dignity of his theme. His still-life (a *Bunch of Flowers*, at Bremen, may serve as an example) makes even a bunch of flowers a little brutal, crammed heavily into a low bowl, and shouting colour at our astonished eyes, that are accustomed to look at flowers with something like affection. How near he came to the Barbizon painters, and yet how infinitely distant he remains from their aims, can be seen in his version of the Forest of Fontainebleau, which is a blunt statement of trees and distance, seen summarily and stated without comment. Courbet was right in his emphatic protest against shams and conventions both in the seeing and in the rendering of what is seen; and it may well be that some of the success of the Barbizon painters after 1849 was due to the vociferous nature of his claims for an unadulterated realism, beside which the romantic and spiritualized realism of a Corot or a Millet was almost a relief; on the other hand, it was in the year of the *Enterrement* that Millet's *Sower* made its appeal to Paris, and the superficial similarity between them, in their choice of subjects from peasant life, may account for the fact that for too long Millet was tarred with the same brush as Courbet.

As a marine painter Courbet had no rival, for here his emphatic technique, his wonderful colour sense, and his



EDOUARD MANET: Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe

EDOUARD MANET: Au Café

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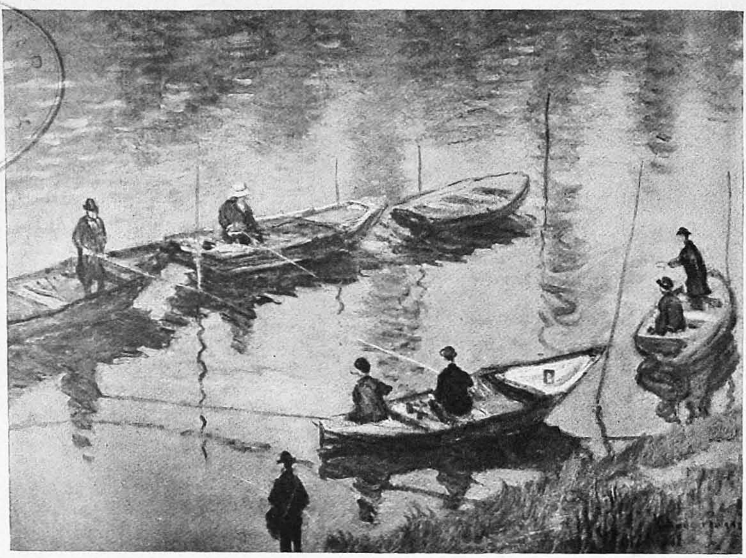

MONET
Fishing on the Seine

By courtesy Messrs. Reid & Lefevre

AUGUSTE RENOIR
" La Songeuse "

restless nature could all find scope without causing offence, and there is an involuntary grandeur in his vast horizons and his tumbled waves, which, even on a small scale, have an unmistakable bigness. But he was a greater painter than he was a man, and there is an irritating triviality in much of his work—for example, the *Demoiselles de la Seine*—which comes between us and the splendour both of the design and the technique.

He was an outlaw in art, as he was both socially and politically, too small in mind, too big in his own estimation, to make full use of the greatness of his talent; and so the place that might have been his, that of the founder of a school of realism, passed to a painter who did not fear to acknowledge his debt to the great realist of the past, Velazquez, and whose fine instinct taught him to use his powers for research into the truths of vision and the possibilities of painting. Manet saw as clearly, with eyes as completely undimmed by sentiment or sympathy, as Courbet. But he was always seeking to understand what it was in that he saw, that made a picture of it to his eyes; and so his work adds to truth, discrimination. He is an intellectual painter, in whom not only skill, nor truth of vision, but rightness in the use of skill and choice of truth, makes beauty where beauty was not visible before he revealed it.

Manet, although he spent six years with Couture, owes nothing to any master but his own scholarly and thoughtful mind, and his own clear vision. It is very difficult nowadays to understand the fierce condemnation which greeted the work of one who never aimed at the destruction of anyone else's ideas or ideals, but only at the expression of his own visual experience. It may be that his point of view was regarded as a dangerous extension of the principles of Courbet, whose influence may perhaps be traced in his *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* of 1863, and that the flat, patterned severity of the famous *Olympia* of 1865 startled those who had become accustomed to regard facile prettiness as preferable to beauty of colour and design. It is remarkable, too, that Courbet disliked the work of Manet, but not very

astonishing, for Manet's realism was that of an intellectual aristocrat who sought out the permanent values of things seen, while Courbet recorded his impressions whole and raw. Indeed, although Manet is an impressionist in the sense that Velazquez was an impressionist, that is to say, he set down in true pigment the actuality of the colours and lights and shadows that went to make up the impression upon his eyes, of the thing seen, his method was to him only a means to an end, and that end was the record of a carefully chosen truth. There was not in his creed anything of that fatal obsession of the analytical means, which was so nearly the undoing of the luminists, Pissarro, Monet, Seurat and Signac, and in a less degree, Sisley.

Yet he was the first painter in France since Chardin to give dignity to the actual handling of paint. When one has recovered from the marvellous reality, and the intricate loveliness of the interplay of greys and of cross-reflected light in the *Bar des Folies Bergères*, the *Portrait de Mme Gonzales* at Dublin, or that of *Mallarmé*, the thing that leaves an abiding memory is the purity and certainty of the painting, of the intimate and inseparable unity of the process with the result: and like Velazquez, Manet presents the record of a momentary vision in all its instantaneous quality, yet chooses his moment so perfectly that it can bear the burden of perpetuation without ever producing that sense of irritation that comes from the contemplation of a triviality prolonged beyond its worth, such as Courbet's *Demoiselles de la Seine*.

Perhaps this is why a painter whose formative influence was the work of Puvis de Chavannes, namely, Jules Bastien-Lepage, comes sometimes so near to the later Manet of the plein-air paintings such as the *Canotiers d' Argenteuil*. For Bastien-Lepage, too, had this perceptive gift of the choice of his moment. He, too, had the respect for paint that did not amount to subservience, but secured harmony between the means and the end ; but his subjective attitude separates him, as it also separates Legros, by a whole world from Manet, and brings him, like Legros, near to Millet. Manet was unbending in his objectivism. The pleasure of

seeing is the only emotion that his works record. It was a pleasure keen enough for one whose eyes missed nothing, and yet kept everything in its proper place as the parts of a single act of vision, as only Velazquez had done before him, and as no one has done since—and this without the smallest preoccupation with regard to the processes of seeing, and of the decomposition and degradation of light. Although contact with Monet influenced him in the direction of raising the key of his pictures, he never tried to make pigment explain how he saw, but only to make it record what he saw.

This intellectual attitude of complete externality to the emotional significance of his subject was too cold for Honoré Daumier (1808–1879), who confessed that Manet's work made him discontented with the old painting, but did not convert him to the new. Yet Daumier was, in his way, a passionate realist, even, in line, an impressionist. A superb draftsman, with a marvellous power of capturing movement, a mordant satire, an infinite pity, he scourged the abuses of contemporary France, and especially those of the law-courts, by means of an art as accomplished, as instantaneous, as noble in design, as it was tremulous with intensity of feeling. With a feeling as keen, but as icy as that of Daumier was fiery, and with Manet's genius for revealing the monumental quality of a moment, Edgar Degas (1834–1917) makes of the scenes of the race-course and the ballet, and of the dreary round of the ballet's practice-rooms, and the grey, dusty wings of the stage, superb designs filled with the weariness, the staleness and the sordidness of life. His power of suggesting movement is uncanny, for he achieves it by an immobilization of action, by the arbitrary truncation of figures by the limits of the canvas, by an infinite subtlety of the play of light and shade in a severely restricted gamut of colour. The first impression conveyed by his pictures to one who seeks to discover the secret of their arresting finality of design, is that it depends rather upon line and tone than upon the plastic aspect of form: but gradually the dominating importance of its modelling, and of the separation of the planes, becomes apparent; and

in this connection it is interesting to recall his practice of making small models in wax, of horses and human figures, as an aid to his work. These models were purely a matter, so to speak, of laboratory research, and were carried no further than was necessary for the elucidation of some problem of the moment. Their recent re-discovery, and their exaltation to the dignity of sculpture, which would doubtless have roused the ironic mirth of the painter, is a symptom of the modern critical attitude, which pays more attention to the mental and technical processes of an artist than to his achievements. The movement in the direction of this attitude was beginning in Degas' own time, and it must be confessed that it was the artists themselves who started it. There may have been some faint foreshadowing of it even in Manet's pleasure in pure painting, of which we see clear evidence in the severely controlled and simplified colour masses of the *Olympia*, and the delicate and intricate handling of tones in the *Servante de Bocks*. It becomes slightly more evident in Degas' arbitrary compositions, with their frequent use of a startling and novel high view-point; and, in the work of his spiritual successors in the art of realistic satire, Toulouse-Lautrec and Forain, although still well under control and definitely subservient to the main aim, which is that of conveying the reaction of the painter to contemporary life and manners, it becomes an integral and essential part of the painter's emotional and intellectual experience.

Fantin-Latour (1836–1902) is an example of the insistence with which the temperament of the individual was able to assert itself in the free atmosphere of art outside the rigid rule of the academy; for though he was a pupil of Courbet, and in a sense a realist, his realism was of so gentle and so selective a kind as to insinuate itself into the approval of the most academic. Though he exhibited at the Salon as early as 1861, it was not until 1870 that he achieved marked success, with the *Atelier à Batignolles*, in which the large and luminous spaces and the quiet liveliness of the admirably placed figures produce an immediate impression of actuality, mitigated by that soft coolness of tone which characterizes

VINCENT VAN GOGH : Lauriers Roses

DHANAKOTI MUDALIAR

all his work. In his flower pieces, now so well known the world over, he captures the essence rather than the form by flowers, and his portraits, such as that of Mr. and Mrs. Edwards, are steeped in the calm, and have the quietude of a still life, without any loss of human vitality. Through all his work runs a scholarly interest in the mechanical process of painting itself, which however is never allowed to become too highly analytical. Fantin-Latour was still a painter rather as a means to an end than for painting's sake, an artist to whom the end was still more important than the means.

It was, in fact, the outlook of the studio, and not of the physical laboratory which guided these men and their descendants in that intimately personal realism which has been called impressionism. It was left to a contemporary and parallel group of realists to lay the burden of scientific, as opposed to aesthetic, research on the shoulders of inspiration; and by a strange paradox, the only forerunner of that group—by whom, incidentally, they were not influenced at all—was a painter to whom the idea of scientific analysis of the source of his inspiration would have been both irksome and ridiculous. Adolphe Monticelli (1824–1886) scarcely impinges upon the history of painting in Paris, where he failed totally to make any impression, and almost all his life was spent in his native Marseilles. His painting youth was dominated by the sternest classicism, and it was not until he came into contact with the work of Delacroix, when he was over forty, and had met Diaz, that his devotion to colour, almost to the exclusion of form, made itself evident. There is not a trace of thought, of scientific control, in his heavily-loaded pigment, his blazing, flickering colour and impenetrable but glowing shadows. It is almost impossible to place him in any category at all, for the only "ism" that can be traced in his work is egotism, but empirically, unconsciously, accidentally, he seems to have hit upon an emotional, not a scientific, process of the analysis of light, which gives to his paintings that effect for which the stock epithet is "jewelled." Possibly by force of contrast of atmospheric and emotional conditions, he has had a singular

attraction for Scottish collectors; the Coates Collection contained a wonderful group of his works, and the *Adoration of the Magi*, at Glasgow, is one of his finest pictures.

He left Paris in 1870, and there is no evidence that he left behind him any impulse which might have set Camille Pissarro and Claude Monet on the path of scientific investigation of the sources of his achievement. It is probably no more than a coincidence that from 1870 onwards, down to the present day, the analytical attitude towards the processes of vision and their translation into pigment has grown in dominance until what was at first a legitimate and helpful addition to the armoury of the painter has become a devouring obsession.

This growth was so gradual as to be almost imperceptible. Many of those who first came under its influence were able to keep it in check, and to make it serve them instead of becoming its slaves. Indeed, in the general estimation, its actual originator, Camille Pissarro (1830–1903), is less memorable as an exponent of "luminism" than Claude Monet (1840–1926), whose devotion to the theory caused him to lose control of it in practice, so that in much of his work the process is more obvious than the result. It was Camille Pissarro who based his work upon the fact that all colour is merely the selective reflection of light, and that consequently what the eye perceives is not the object itself, but an infinite number of dots of light, decomposed so as to present one or other of the colours of the spectrum, which, in the aggregate, present a coherent image. It is merely a question of carrying to its scientific and logical conclusion the empirical method of Velazquez and of Manet, who had stopped at the point of transferring to their canvas the separable masses of colour apparent to their own vision.

Camille Pissarro was a perfectly simple-minded lover of landscape with a strong human element; above all, he loved sunlight, and it was his love of sunlight that impelled him to find a method of recording its penetrating and pervasive quality. So far as his choice of subject is concerned, he is not far removed from Millet. In the Leeds Art Gallery

is a tiny picture of men asleep under a hayrick which shows how completely free he was from all doctrinaire preoccupations with the means, compared with his enjoyment of the thing seen both in its visual and its emotional aspects; and the famous *Lavandières* tells the same story. His later work applies the same freshness and honesty of vision to scenes of the port and streets of Rouen, and of Paris with its movement and human vivacity. His *Entrée du Village* in the Luxembourg is a simple record of a sunlit road, in which the impression of sunshine and peace leaves one, in its satisfying completeness, wholly indifferent to the means by which it has been captured. Alfred Sisley (1839–1899), with a quieter scale of tones, a lower note of light, lays a faintly stronger emphasis upon his analytical method of painting, but achieves a no less satisfying synthesis in the resultant impression of the soft but penetrating grey light on the Seine, whether among the bridges of Paris, or in its open reaches, where the cathedral-like masses of poplars stand monumentally against high skies. Georges Seurat, carrying the process to the point of a minute granulation of his colour, as in his *Poseuses*, where the nude figures of women in a studio are seen against a background of an almost life-size landscape painting on the wall, challenged the infinite difficulties of the representation of interior light, and in the exquisite *Bathers* in the Tate Gallery, or the *Pont de Courbevoie*, shows that the same elaborately patient technique can be made to serve the purpose of that indescribable tremulous quality of light seen both at close quarters and at long range over moving water.

It is Claude Monet who will be remembered as a luminist when these men have taken their place simply as great painters of light; for to Monet the theory mattered more than the very thing that its practice was intended to achieve. It is unjust that this should be so, for if Monet had left luminism alone altogether, he would still have been a great painter, greater, perhaps than any luminist, certainly greater than he actually became in his devotion to a technical process. Monet's earliest painting has a gaiety, a justice of design, a vigour of vision, altogether captivating. *L'Eté* in

the Luxembourg, painted before he was concerned with theories, reveals him as a very great master of paint, with a keen unity of vision and a power of instantaneous selection and statement of essentials which place him close beside Manet ; and this resemblance is seen more forcibly still in the wonderful spatial calm of *Après le Diner*, and its masterly handling of quiet tones and rightly placed masses.

Yet, once he was committed to the life of research to which he devoted himself, he was right to abandon this lively and attractive figure painting for the more submissive subjects of landscape and architecture. True to his theory that light was the only thing that the eye perceived, he was careful not to prolong any single sitting at his work on any subject beyond the very limited time during which the light remained the same. The essential " titles " of his pictures were rather the hours of the day and the seasons of the year than such and such a cathedral or group of trees. And it is significant, seeing that his first impulse towards the painting of light came from the study in London in 1871 of the work of Turner and Constable, that Constable himself, the first impressionist of all, had the habit of noting in detail, on the back of his oil studies of clouds, the date, the time of day, the changes of weather, even the direction of the wind. There is in the Birmingham Art Gallery such a study, inscribed, " 5.5 o'clock. Evening Aug 31st 1822. Large clouds to the Eastward : Light wind." Yet, to those who can set aside Monet's own obsession by the means, the ends that he achieved are both of wonderful beauty and of infinite value as a contribution to the development of painting. It has been said that in the series of the Cathedrals, architecture became confounded, form destroyed, in the haze of an infinity of mingled tints. This is scarcely true. Even in an extreme example, like the *Cathedral of Rouen*, the architectural forms, in almost bewildering truth of detail, gradually emerge to the attentive eye. In the views of Venice, it is rather that the selective perception of the artist is overstrained by the unaccustomed vividness and vigour of the light, than that the actual forms are lost. In the last series, the *Nymphéas*,

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H. ROUSSEAU

"Bonne Fête"

PIERRE BONNARD

La Table

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VINCENT VAN GOGH: Vincent's Bedroom, 1888

VINCENT VAN GOGH: Auvers sur Oise, 1890

it was a wise retreat from the arbitrary demands of architectural form upon the aged painter's failing vision that caused him to choose a type of subject in which colour, rather than form, was the vehicle of the light that he sought to paint.

Monet was, above all, logical. He was not a dreamer or a visionary. He did not seek to paint the light that never was on and or sea—quite the contrary; it was only in so far that the light was on land or sea that he could paint it at all. His only failing was that he put research before results, and we can but sigh for the results that he might have achieved, if, with the knowledge of light that he attained, he could have used it as carelessly, as happily, as did that irresponsible lover of all good things in life, Renoir (1841–1920).

To represent Renoir as standing midway between Manet and Monet is perhaps to do all three of them injustice; for both Manet and Monet were serious painters, while to Renoir painting just happened to be his way of expressing his delight at being alive in so jolly a world. His robust and cheerful animalism expressed itself with an ease which shows little or no concern with the means of its expression. It does one's heart good to know that a world which Degas found so stale, Manet so serious, and Monet so ethereal, was, after all, so full of fun, of pretty, plump women, of sunshine and sunshades one moment, and showers and umbrellas the next; that the common incidents of every day, from the drabness of a railway waiting-room to a chattering crowd in the Bois, were worth recording for the enjoyment that someone who could paint got out of them, not merely because they presented a problem of painting, or the material for a scientific thesis. One need only instance *La Loge*, *Le Moulin de la Galette*, or *La Balançoire* to show that Renoir could paint, and because he could paint, could use now the beautifully balanced passages of pigment that Manet had made possible, and now the iridescent play of broken colour of which Monet made a life-work ; but it did not matter greatly to him what he used, so long as, by using it, he could give rein to his genius for luscious colour, for the rendering of warm flesh, and lively movement of

design. To be sure, as he grew older, he showed an inclination to *embonpoint*, both mentally and in the physical types that he chose as his medium of expression. His natural sensuousness, which never once degenerated into sensuality, found its outlet in an exaggerated curvilinear character of design, and in an over-emphatic rosiness of flesh-tones. But his whole work and outlook were a healthy set-back to the growing tendency among painters to turn their work into a disquisition on painting. We may call him an impressionist if it pleases us to label everything. A better description is that of an artist, *tout court*.

Signac has carried the method of Monet to greater lengths of emphasis, without carrying it further as a means of painting light. His work has a vigour, especially in the painting of moving water, and the passing to and fro of ships, which Monet sometimes lacked, especially in his Venetian scenes: but his attitude towards painting shows the tendency to develop a mere technical method into an idiosyncrasy, which is the pitfall of all followers of a theoretic doctrine, and in this case has at least the excuse that the leader himself had fallen into the same trap. Henri Edmond Cross, while perpetuating the method of juxtaposed points of colour, actually abandoned its original purpose, and used it for the sake of the sparkling quality that it gave to his bold and ingenious arrangements of colour.

Whistler, who was in Paris at the moment of these adventures into theory, and of the crystallization of the practice of Manet, Degas and Monet into an "Impressionist" doctrine, did not trouble his head greatly about theories and doctrines. He shared the impressionists' enthusiasm for the newly discovered art of the Japanese print (which had had a powerful effect upon the art of Degas, for instance), noted, as it were, the essentials which went to make up the qualities of the work of Manet and, in a less degree, the scientific luminism of Monet, and then betook himself to London with a mission after his own heart, *épater le bourgeois*, an easier task in London than in Paris: but it was precisely that healthy egotism which made him a real power there, and an effective missionary of personal

expression in painting. Bonnard did no more than unite the gaiety of Renoir with Monet's passion for light intervening between him and his subject, and in his truncation of his subject by the limits of his canvas or millboard only repeats the method of Degas of obtaining the effect of forceful movement, with less justification. Vuillard, by forcing delicate variations of tone to do all the work of separating forms from one another, in compositions often restless and confusing by reason of unnecessarily broken colour, merely produces a variation on what Seurat achieved to perfection in his interiors, and what Pissarro and Sisley, each in his own way, had done much better, so far as plein-air painting is concerned. From among these permutations and combinations of Impressionism, three figures of the utmost importance emerged, to give to the development of painting in France a new, and as it proved later, an exciting and perilous direction.

Paul Gauguin (1848–1903), in appropriate paradox, was the pupil of Pissarro and a convinced admirer of Ingres. Line was his inspiration, and pure colour his natural vehicle. It was proper that he should soon break away from luminism, which was flatly contradictory to his decorative impulse, and repressive of his flamboyantly sensuous nature. His instinctive passion for colour, and his marvellous control of it, found temperate expression in his flower painting, of which there is a notable example in the Tate Gallery; but as early as 1886, he was restless for a wider colour-experience, and a visit to Brittany in that year resulted in a definite abandonment of luminist doctrines, and was followed by a voyage to the Antilles; and by 1890 he had completely left behind him the hampering divisionism of colours which cramped him in his decorative aims. It is most remarkable that so purely temperamental a painter should have been able to keep within such iron control, in his work, the colossal egotism and unbridled impatience of civilization which marred his life. It is true that, after a visit of two years to Tahiti, he was no longer able to contemplate life under the conditions of European civilization, and soon left France for ever, spending the rest of his life in Martinique, where

his work came to its full flower of magnificent colour and severe and strangely calm design. For all his violence, there was in him a strain of simplicity which is the real secret of his undoubted genius. He did not attempt to tamper with his instinct for colour, which, wherever colour was, reduced it, or rather enhanced it to its simplest and most emphatic note. His was not a dramatic, but a mystical interpretation of his theme. Even in the tropical sunshine, he was never tempted to mitigate his colour by strong contrast of light and shade. Instead, his shadows became colour, as strong and pure as the colours that represented light; and his unerring sense of design fitted them into an arabesque which, for all its decorative stillness, is full of an intense vitality. From his *Horsemen on the Beach*, now at Essen, with its lingering traces of luminism, through *Le Christ jaune*, and the later Breton pictures, to the frankly patterned scarlets and yellows and greens of *Ta Matete* or the glowing quietude of the *Story Teller*, from first to last, design, the severe design of Ingres, holds all extravagance in check. We tremble to think what might have become of Gauguin if he had lost his balance; but he never did. With all his gigantic selfishness, cruelty and egotism, with all his sensuous exuberance and mysticism, he was unalterably sane.

Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890) was not; yet, because he was a painter by urgent need rather than by reason of any innate capacity for painting, because, in face of the obstacles of material discouragement and mental instability, he wrung out for himself a kind of technical process by which he was able, if incompletely, at least intelligibly, to express himself, he has left an indelible mark upon the history of art.

His *Pietà* after Delacroix (1889) shows us how late and how earnestly he tried to master the orthodox technique of composition and draftsmanship, and also that in failing to do so, he created an art of his own, alike in line, in colour, and in brushwork. His self-portrait in a straw hat is not a mere attempt at the divisionism of Monet, but a kind of frenzied extension of its possibilities from the rendering of physical light to that of a spiritually enhanced and exaggerated vision. His contact with Gauguin was either

London, S. Courtauld Collection

PAUL CEZANNE

Les Grands Arbres

DHANAKOTI IAR

heaven-sent or fatal, according to whether we regard it as fortunate or unfortunate that a mind trembling always on the verge of insanity should have been excited to the point of a superhuman sensibility which finally overthrew it altogether, but, in the process, gave to it a rapture of perception that forced its way to expression in the glowing and sparkling colour, the restless movement of light and the huge extent of perspective of the *Poppy Field* (Bremen) or the *Irises at Arles*. It is not as though van Gogh had succumbed easily to the impulse to paint, or that, during the short last period of his life during which he poured out his soul in colour, he ever thought himself an accomplished painter, still less a master. His art was extorted from him rather than evoked, by his passionate love of light and colour. In his quieter mood, that of the *Drawbridge* or the *Boats at Ste Marie*, he has his technique well in control, and though its rules are its own, as witness the strong whole colour of the boats in the latter, it is as near to a derivative of luminism as makes no matter. Sometimes he is calm enough to seize upon an exquisite design, Japanese in its economy, like the *Little Tree in Bloom* or the *Oleanders*. The world-famous *Sunflowers* strikes a stronger note, but is still, even in its triumphant handling of the symbolic yellow of the unbalanced mind, severely controlled. In his portraits, such as the *Zouave*, the *Young Man in a Felt Hat*, or the *Provençal Peasant*, and most of all, perhaps, in the *Portrait of Dr. Gachet*, the subjective and objective are perfectly balanced. As designs, both in line and colour, they are of a complete sureness and finality; as human beings seen with the penetrating eagerness of a man seeking feverishly in every direction for sympathy, like a child in a house full of strangers, they have an intense pathos, which culminates in the self-portrait already mentioned. In his last work of all, the wild, definitely mad but hugely impressive *Cornfield with Crows*, painted in 1890, in the asylum at Auvers, in which he ended his days, all vestige of self-control has disappeared. Earth and sky are aflame with colour and movement. Nothing is still, nothing is ordered; it is like a vision of the crack of doom, the world's beauty reeling to destruction before the

eyes of the last man left alive, whose primary instinct, an unspeakable joy in colour, remains with him to the very end, intensified by the tragedy of its passing.

Only extravagant phrases can convey even a shadowy impression of an extravagant art. To say merely that van Gogh's work stands as proof that a madman, to whom his medium was an agonizing obstacle, can yet be a great painter, would be perfectly true, but it would not point the inseparable connection between the madness and the greatness. It was when his restless search for a truth that lay beyond the scope of painting reached the point of fury that El Greco touched his highest achievement. Whether we call Blake unbalanced or merely supersensitive, it was when he was, at any rate, least normal that he was most monumental. In his last months of unhinged exaltation, Charles Sims, a mystic from his youth, at once revealed and immortalized himself; and in the work of all these men we shall find, in their great moments, the same passion for the aggressive, angry note of yellow that was the key-colour of all van Gogh's most completely inspired work. This by the way; but it may well be that to see colour, sharp and strong and pure colour, and, above all, his beloved yellow, kept rigidly in order by the iron sanity of Gauguin, as though it were the obedient material of a mediæval glass worker, drove van Gogh to frenzied assertion of its power to transcend all bonds and rules, and so nerved him to his highest, because they were his least sane efforts.

Paul Cézanne (1839–1906) was a man with a rare eye for beauty, but cursed with an excess of artistic conscience, which drove him into lifelong search for first causes. The airless spaces of Provençal sunlight exalted form, the individual forms of houses, trees and mountains, into an obsession, a monumental fact transcending all other considerations. Form, and the space separating one form from another, became so important to him, that, not content with their visual impression, of which Manet from one point of view and Monet from another had shown him the interpretation, he returned to his native Aix-en-Provence to work out his own destiny in his own way, for to him their impres-

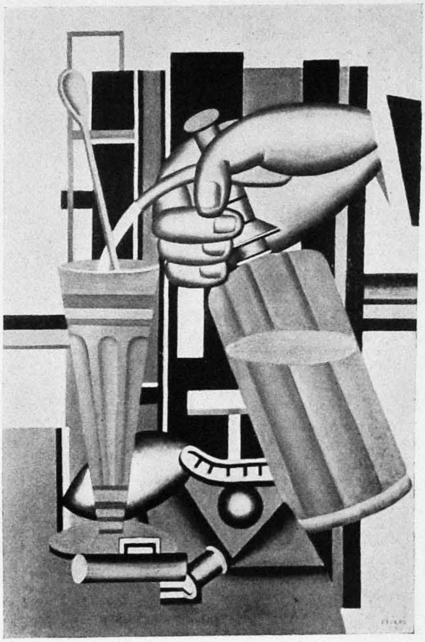
sionism was a mere wraith of the essential substantiality of things.

A very sensitive colourist, with a delicate appreciation of the overnote of grey to which the intense sunshine of Provence subdues her naturally harsh colouring, he produced at first simple and convincing renderings of his native landscape, in which his later development is only faintly foreshadowed by the emphasis that is laid upon the masses of buildings and the penetrating perspective of roads, which give a remarkable solidity and depth to his pictures; but gradually the desperate attempt to tie down to line and rule the realization of mass and space, becomes apparent. Composition is forced to follow the lines of a geometric scheme, as the painter tries to emphasize the underlying abstract form which appears to him to be the essence of each separate mass, all of which must be brought into harmony with one another, if the essential and permanent beauty of a landscape is to be discovered and recorded. To Cézanne, the horizontal lines of the design expressed the lateral scope of vision, the vertical lines its depth : and since the normal human vision is deeper than it is broad, he sought generally to make the vertical the predominant factor of his design. This was natural enough among the piled-up hill towns, with their vigorously separated rectangular masses of houses, and it works well enough with such subjects as the *View of Septenne.* It is more difficult to follow, but no less dominant in the still-life paintings, such as the *Apples and Oranges* in the Luxembourg, where, too, vigorous emphasis is laid upon the spherical solidity of the fruit; for he insisted always upon the fact that it is the nearest point in every object upon which the eye naturally dwells, and that all else is relatively diffuse in its effect. There is exactly the same isolation of solid forms in space in the *Card Players* in the Louvre, and here we begin to see that resolution of an irregular form like a human figure into a combination of regular forms—cylinders, cones, cubes and triangles—which was to Cézanne merely a means of arriving at the essential and fundamental truth with regard to the components of his design, though it was later misconstrued as having been an aim in itself.

His analysis of his subject was undertaken, not for its own sake, nor for the sake of disintegrating natural forms, but merely to arrive at a scientific and intelligent synthesis in place of an empirical record, which was all that the painting of the impressionists appeared to him to be.

In Cézanne's own hands, it is astounding to see how free from technical affectation, and how satisfying in results, so rigid a system can be. The *Auvers sur Oise* (Magdeburg), in which the lingering influence of Monet can be seen, owes the whole of its spatial depth to the vertical lines of the trees in the foreground, not to the rather uncertain management of tones. In the *Railway Cutting* (Munich), the series of triangles which forms the geometric basis of the design, produces perfectly naturally, and with no undue stress upon the formula, a sense of easy and gradual recession, except where the vertical lines of the house on the left throw the horizon back to extreme distance, and the little square hut beside the dark bank of the cutting makes evident at a glance the empty width of the cutting itself. *L'Estaque* is a marvel of wide spaces, in which everything depends upon the one unobtrusive vertical line of the distant chimney. True, Cézanne failed as often as he succeeded, so that we are sometimes tempted to wish that he could have remained the sensitive colourist, the sympathetic painter of Provence that he was at first, after his return from Paris; but when we find that his scientific attitude towards the principles of painting did not rob him either of his love of landscape for itself, or of his human sympathies, which are so tenderly expressed in his *Woman with a Rosary*, or by the shrewd observation which leaps to the eye in the *Avocat*, we cannot but feel that the art of painting is the richer and the stronger for his patient search for the underlying truths of form, and for the secret of rendering upon a flat surface the mass and distance which had evaded capture by means of purely linear perspective.

The opening years of the 20th century found impressionism firmly established as a recognized and valuable addition to the expressive powers of painting; but of its pioneers only Monet and Renoir survived, the former still vigorous, but



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FERNAND LEGER
Le Syphon

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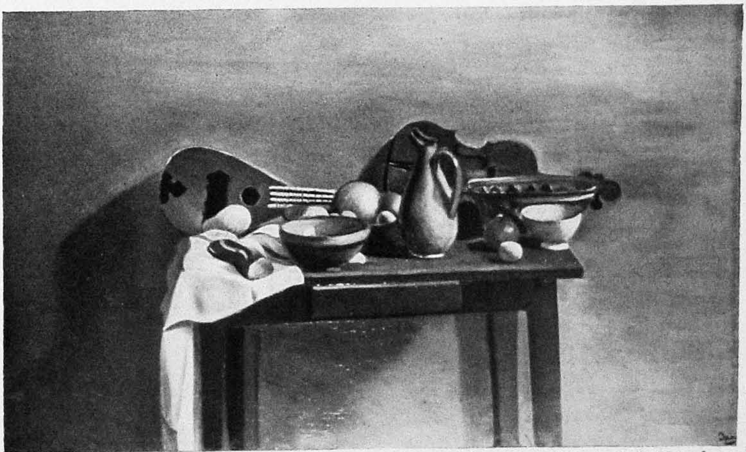

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A. DERAIN
La Table

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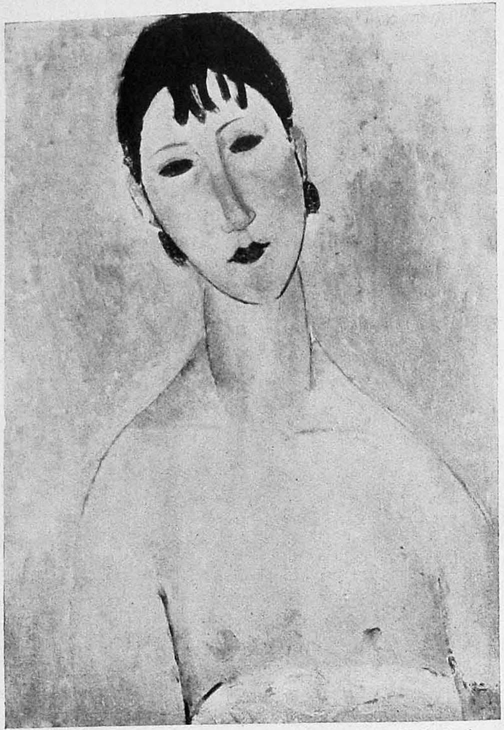

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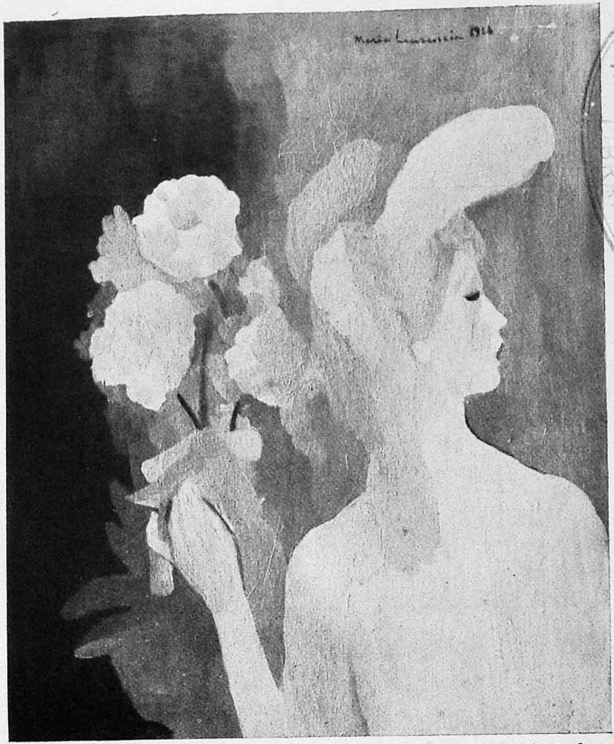
MODIGLIANI

Buste de jeune femme "Elvira"



By courtesy Messrs. Reid & Lefevre

MARIE LAURENCIN

La jeune fille aux fleurs

gradually surrendering his initiative to a technical process and allowing theory to drive out inspiration, and the latter past the zenith of his exuberant powers, with years of decline before him. It is a thousand pities that the fame and prestige of the Renoir of *Le Loge* and *Le Déjeuner*, and the earlier nudes, should have become attached like a label to the productions of a paralysed hand and failing mind, and that these degenerate forms should have been made the basis of the formulæ of the egoists of the first quarter of this century. Yet, more than Renoir, or indeed than any impressionist, Cézanne was made to serve the turn of men who had room in their minds for only one idea at a time, and even that idea in a cramped and distorted form. These men seized eagerly upon Cézanne's unguarded reference to the underlying presence of solid geometrical forms in all natural forms, and made of it a gospel. The painter of Provence was scarcely in his grave before the principles of composition in three dimensions which he had spent his life in seeking, that he might use them to give greater objective truth to the rendering of his conception of natural beauty, were dragged away from their purpose, and set up as a kind of idol and plaything in one, an eternal truth (which they are) and the material for a set of arbitrary symbols of subjectivism run to seed.

The processes of this misinterpretation are summed up in Mr. Clive Bell's statement that the aim of Cézanne was not to paint pictures but to establish a knowledge of the essential in natural phenomena. Thus, the lover of art is allied to the mathematician, and certain relations of forms give rise to emotion on account of their rightness. According to this view, Cézanne only painted landscapes in order to discover the cubes and cones and cylinders that were inherent in landscape forms. It does not seem to have occurred to the critic that Cézanne may well have sought to discover these forms in order to be able to paint better, because truer, landscapes, that, in fact, mathematical forms only pleased him because they were part of a landscape that he loved and to which he wished to do the fullest justice; and that they only possessed importance to him in so far

as he could discover, and depict, their relation to his subject, and in so far as their order and immutability contributed to the order and immutability of the design which he perceived in nature. In short, the Fauves, headed by Matisse, derived from the art of Cézanne a theory based upon that ancient error, the inversion of the means and the end. Since the pleasure evoked by the sight of an object was nothing to do with the nature of that object, but arose from its suggestion of geometric form, the nature of that pleasure could only be truly expressed by stripping those geometric forms of the obscuring envelope of natural appearance, and exposing them fully to view. But the reverence of Matisse for Renoir, and his enjoyment of colour and line, caused him to retain some semblance of decorative balance, especially in the distribution of colour-masses. Although he retains no more of drawing, in the sense of the representation of the contours of objects, than is necessary t ohold his colour together, his line, purely as line, is firm and expressive. The coarseness and clumsiness of his rendering of objects, and the forced colour, are deliberate expedients to divert attention from the material nature of objects, and to concentrate all stress on the sense of abstract form which they evoke.

When, in unadulterated Cubism—a word invented by Matisse himself to describe the work of Picasso, about 1910—the principle is carried further, the suggestion of the forms that evoked the paintings, a face, a bottle, a fruit dish (that " eternal compotier " of the cubists) becomes a mere hint. In the first stages of Picasso's development, when he was under the influence of that short-lived but brilliant satirist Toulouse-Lautrec, the only hint of his coming conversion to cubism is a very sensitive reaction to the constructive value of line in design. In such a rapid impression as *Le départ des Hirondelles* there is everything that need be said—three telegraph wires, seven birds in a dozen strokes of the brush, ships, sea, sky; but the force of the work, its truth of record, its decorative finality, all reside in the exact relation of the lines to one another, and the firmness of rectilinear construction.

To follow him through his thirty years of variations on a single theme would be to write the history of cubism from beginning to end; the one unvarying theme is the statement, in terms of abstract form and arbitrary arrangements of colour, of his own reactions to an object more or less (generally less) clearly defined; the interludes are marked by representations, sometimes of singular power and purity of modelling, of figures, like *La Vie*—in the early "blue period"—and the very beautiful portrait of Mme Picasso. The most recent phase is the creation of arbitrary forms, such as the *Baigneuse* and *Abstraction* (1930) with a literal verisimilitude of modelling which makes them appear as solid as sculpture. The remarkable thing about them all—even those of the period of negroid influence—is that they have the vitality of sincerity, and that on the rare occasions on which Picasso emerges from these periods of what, for want of a better name, we must call research, he seems on each successive occasion to have gained strength in the expression of the solidity and mass of his subject. His latest paintings of purely invented forms are so true to the facts of light and shade that one might almost imagine them to have had an independent and objective existence, and one cannot help feeling that if this power were applied to representation of ordinary subjects it would result in an uncanny realism.

Beside Picasso, Braque is a painter of limited range. His still-life paintings sink into a monotony of harsh colour, interrupted forms, and apparently incoherent design. They have a kind of dull strength, but do not seem otherwise to contribute anything useful to the scope of painting. In Fernand Leger there is a constant echo of the fascination of the forms of machinery, which contaminates all other forms touched by him. Hebert is a serious rival of the designers of the tiled pavements of lavatories.

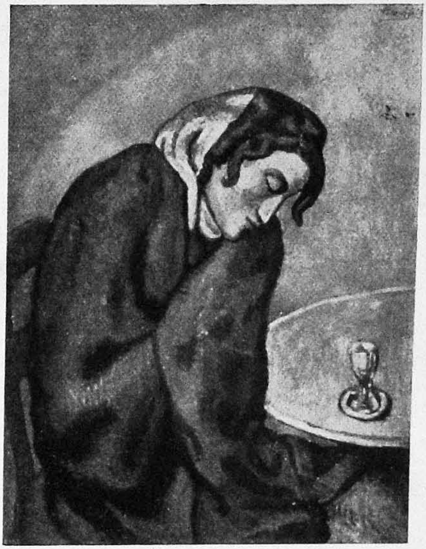
In short, "Art is the *arbitrary* utilization of nature at the bidding of the caprices of the painter's sensibility," as André Lhote has expressed it. And if we object—"Why drag in nature?" the cubist will point out with perfect truth that he does so as little as possible, and, in fact, does all he

can to drive her out, and that that is what he is most blamed for doing.

Expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret.

Though the foregoing pages may seem to have no good word for cubism, we may at least, in writing its epitaph, find some kind word to say: for cubism is dead and buried—as a doctrine; but its soul goes marching on. The cubists were right in everything they preached. To read a cubist manifesto is to read rare good sense, a sound and sane exposition of some of the functions of art. What they overlooked, and what the survivors in its practice still overlook, is that their discoveries are not discoveries at all, but merely very ancient principles, which, when *embodied* in the craft of painting, form part of all great creations throughout the world; and that, isolated, torn from their context, they cannot stand alone.

There were those among them who were not slow to find this out. In 1907 there came from Italy a counterblast of devastating strength, the doctrine of Futurism, borne on a whirlwind of explanatory literature; Marinetti, Boccioni, Severini and the rest of the little band of prophets proclaimed to the world that the immobilization of a single reaction in terms of its arbitrary equivalent in abstract form was the very antithesis of art: that the sensibility of the artist was a matter of a succession of reactions, and it was the interrelations of these reactions that must be expressed, in terms of time as well as of space. What they meant is not so clear as what they did, which was to develop methods of expressing movement, and its effect upon the impression produced in the mind as well as upon the eye. Whether the movement were physical or mental—the succession of visual images or that of thought passing through the mind—they aimed at embodying it in a fixed design by form and colour, and though the task they set themselves was one which lies outside the scope of painting as they found it, it is not so certainly impossible as that of the cubists was futile; for while the latter aimed at cramping the scope of painting within the rigid limits of an extreme subjectivism,



PICASSO: The Absinthe Drinker

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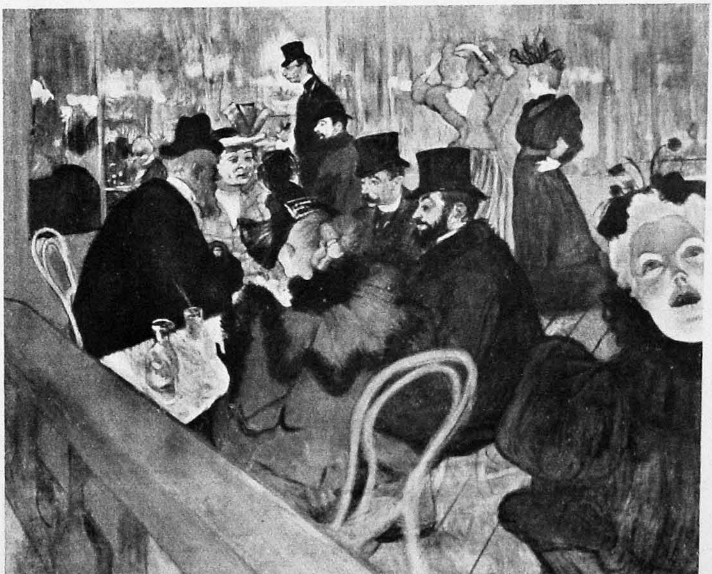
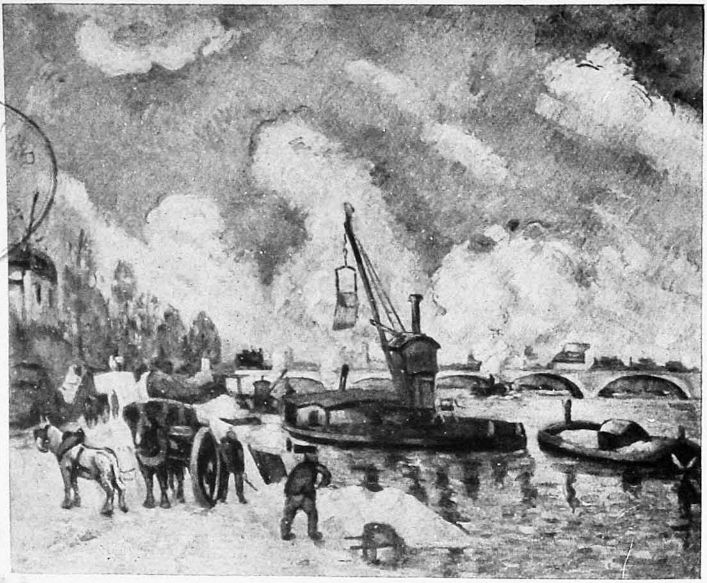
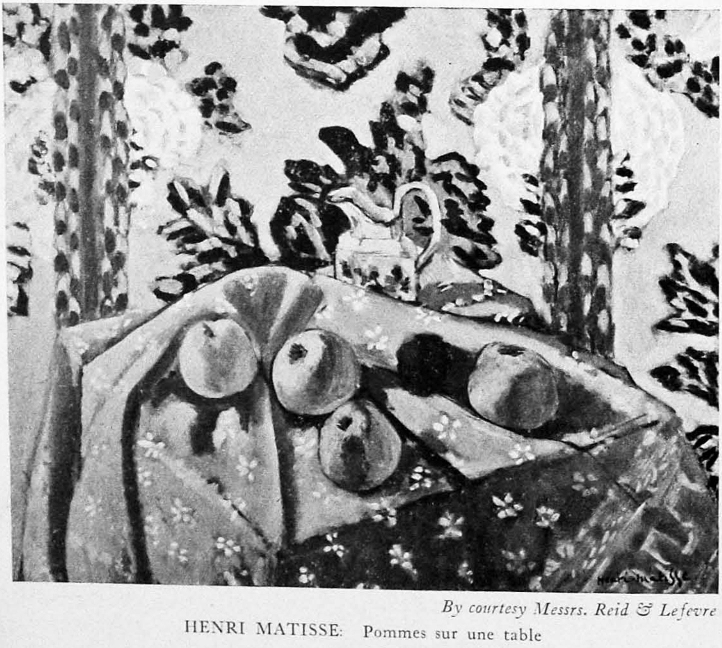


By courtesy Art Institute, Chicago

H. DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC: Au Moulin Rouge



PAUL CEZANNE: Le Seine



By courtesy Messrs. Reid & Lefevre

HENRI MATISSE: Pommes sur une table

the futurists sought to expand it to include a hitherto untouched aspect of the objective world. Severini's *Bal Tabarin* and Boccioni's *Volumini dinamici di una testa* show how nearly they succeeded; and all popular art throughout Europe to-day shows traces of their vigorous and enlivening influence. Severini has been claimed as a convert to cubism, and certainly in his most recent work he has abandoned the more obvious form in which he formerly expressed the aims of futurism. There is no longer in his work the confusing but convincing flicker of half-seen forms and sudden and disconcerting but perfectly rational shifting of the point of view. But even in the decorative designs in flat colour, which he has produced within the last few years, with their stray insistence here and there upon the geometric basis of the predominant elements of the design, there are traces of the multiple view-point, and they are definitely objective in their approach to the " evocative theme "; and in his stage settings he is making a steady return to a simplified impressionism. In short, in so far as he has touched cubism, he has incorporated it as an element of design, instead of succumbing to it as an egotistical obsession.

In a rather different and less intelligent way Lurçat, and his faithful follower Tristram Hillier, are but half-hearted cubists, infected by a kind of static futurism. The medley is unfortunate, for their shattered fragments of brick walls and disjointed suggestions of fragmentary buildings, which are labelled landscapes, and are expressed in gross leaden colour, convey the impression of confusion rather than consecution of thought and view-point, and are neither symbolic nor decorative.

The fact is, that there is nothing to hold either cubism or futurism together. Both are mere fragments of a big idea, the basic idea of art, which is the reflection of the artist's personality in terms of his aesthetic reaction to external conditions. It is the externality of the conditions which makes them the medium of communication between the artist and the layman. It is the infusion of a personal element into the artist's rendering of them which makes them the record of himself; the complete detachment of the emotion from

its source renders the emotion itself meaningless; it is as hough a man should work himself into such a fury as to forget what made him angry, or should laugh himself into a state of causeless, and so uncontrollable, hilarity, commonly called hysteria.

This is not the place, however, for a disquisition on the aims and achievements of fauvism, cubism and futurism. For our purpose it is sufficient to note that the second grew out of the work of Cézanne by a process of forcing Cézanne's researches into the geometric bases of form and pictorial design into the false position of an end in themselves; that while this line of development has resulted in the deviation of a number of intelligent and thoughtful painters into paths along which it is difficult, and perhaps not worth while to follow them, a contact with cubism has on the whole been beneficial to those painters who have had the steadiness to observe that it is not a false system, but only an overstatement of a part of the truth; that fauvism was no more, similarly, than an exaggeration of the element of abstract pattern in painting, and that futurism was a scientific application of optical processes to representative art, combined with an empirical attempt to reduce the psychological parallel of those optical phenomena to visual formulæ, and was consequently a mixture of truth and falsehood.

Among those who touched fauvism and gained thereby, Derain is conspicuous. It has been denied that he ever considered cubism seriously, but it is certain that, in the company of Matisse and Braque, he considered both the "creeds" and deliberately and after study of them, rejected them both. Starting from the standpoint of Cézanne, and attracted by the naïve simplicity of mediæval art, Derain was rescued from preciosity by a rich capacity for the enjoyment of natural beauty and an impulsive swiftness of statement in paint which gives alike to his portraits, still-life subjects and landscapes, a spontaneity, a freedom from arbitrary adaptation to a fixed technique that are wholly delightful, and his sober and restricted range of colour adds value to an extremely delicate perception and rendering of light.

Maurice Vlaminck, violent in colour, summary in execution, seizes with convincing directness the verisimilitude of an aspect of nature. His snow scenes especially, and his simple landscape compositions, with a tall gable or a village steeple as the culminating point of a severely rigid design, owe much to Cézanne, and perhaps more than he himself would acknowledge, to the earlier researches of cubism; but most of all they are the expression, in simple and intelligible terms, of a robust and genial personality.

Suzanne Valadon owes more to Renoir and Degas—to the former for richness of form, to the latter for precision in line and design—than to any 20th-century group of theorists. The element of hardness and, sometimes, of clumsiness in her work is rather primitive than precious. She is a real artist, but of unfulfilled possibilities.

The same may be said of her son, Maurice Utrillo, who learned to paint mainly from her, and, despite the frantic claims of some writers, is neither more nor less than a romantic realist, with a natural but unbalanced genius for the use of pigment. His pictures of suburban streets are frankly portraits of places, but a lovely colour sense, exercised in a rich scale of browns and greys and soft yellows, and a feeling for the value of a paint-surface amounting to genius, lift them to a high plane of achievement; but one is sometimes inclined to feel that his brilliance hovers on the brink of becoming a fatal facility. Whereas his mother's work is full of fine purpose, but deficient in the means of expression, his power of execution and subtle susceptibility to colour are sometimes frittered away in mere fireworks. A little cubism might do him good. Yet another painter, who was an artist rather in intention than in achievement, was Henri Rousseau (*Le Douanier*). This was a good soul who, so to speak, painted on Saturday afternoons, with even less training than Utrillo, and without his instinctive command of paint and drawing: but he had a natural gift for composition, a genuinely primitive sense of colour, and a childlike eye for, and enjoyment of, detail. Moreover, when he wanders from recording, faithfully according to his lights,

the landscapes and river scenes of his own immediate surroundings in the neighbourhood of Paris, and paints imaginary tropical jungles, his vision soars to fantasy of a rarely ordered charm. By any academic standard, he was just a man who wanted to paint and could not, because he had never learnt how to set about it: but the indefinable charm of a genuine and trusting simplicity must inevitably have been lost in any acquired technical facility. The word "artless" describes exactly the art of Rousseau. It is childlike, not childish.

There is one artist who presents so delicious a contrast to Rousseau in every conceivable way, that the temptation to place her beside him is too strong to be resisted. That is Marie Laurencin, whose brief flirtation with cubism ended in its merciless jilting by this butterfly among the painters, and she has been making fun of the rejected suitor ever since, and at the same time has been wearing unscrupulously the presents she derived from the association.

Figures, fantasies and flowers, all her works are shadowy things, scarcely more than suggestive of form, only splashed with pinks and greens that are mere echoes of colour: yet they have an indefinable air of precision and finality. Their design is unalterable, their placing of the "tache" impeccable. One can take them seriously no more than any other fairy tale, but they leave behind them a haunting belief in the reality of fairies—somewhere out of sight. Though there is little enough of cubist principle to be found in them, it is just the faint touch of cubist form which gives them permanence without robbing them of their essential unsubstantiality.

These are but a few of the personalities which emerge from the triple mass of French painters of to-day; the more or less academic descendants of the Barbizon painters and the impressionists on the one hand, the theorists upon the other, and, midway between them, those who partake a little of the character of both, using the older, taking what it suits them to take, without much regard to its theoretic basis, from the younger group. It would be possible to continue the list almost interminably, but it could be no

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[FANTIN-LATOUR: Study of Flowers

ALFRED SISLEY: Sunny Landscape

PAUL GAUGUIN
Jacob wrestling with the Angel

A. DUNOYER DE SEGONZAC
Landscape

DHANAKOTI MUDALIAR

more than a mere list, for the grip of classification is mercifully losing its hold day by day, and the individual is once again beginning to count for more than the group, and the artist to win back ground from the doctrinaire. It would be idle, because it would be untrue, to assert that a quarter of a century of exploration of new paths has had no beneficial effect on the art of painting; not all the paths have been blind alleys, and the painful effort even of futile endeavour is a greater stimulus to sincerity than the vain repetition of the discoveries of a past generation. And so, though naturalism is gaining ground every day, theoretic and "scientific" painting have served a very useful turn in forcing those who have decided to shake it off, to paint with their heads as well as with their hands. So, we have Coubine, using simply and sanely a sense of the solidity of forms derived indubitably from contact with the Fauves and the cubists, but employed only to give a greater dignity to what might otherwise be very commonplace figures and landscapes. There was poor Modigliani, fascinated by negroid art forms, and haunted by cubist abstractions, but reducing both to a mannerism of elongated form which may be irritating, but is certainly expressive, and not one whit more extravagant than El Greco's *San Maurizio*. Edmond Ceria might have been a very dull photographic landscapist, if the cubists, or, at any rate, the example of Cézanne, had not taught him to confine himself, with a rigidly subjective selection, to the aspects of his landscape that were essential to his own enjoyment of it. Pascin owes as much to futurism and to Matisse as to the cubists, and probably more to Toulouse-Lautrec than any of them, but, even if he is difficult to follow, he is worth the trouble for the impression of liveliness and movement, even of noise, that he is able to convey. In Luc-Albert Moreau, and in Maurice Asselin, we have a full return to a vigorous and instantaneous realism, in which, however, it is impossible to overlook a sturdiness of structure that is definitely referable to the influence of the experimentalists in the abstraction of form, and to such a sober and thoughtful cubist as Othon Friesz. Kees van Dongen insults the intelligence with his gaudy gaieties of patterned

portraiture, but they are delightful all the same, and the Fauves are their godparents: and even in spite of an academic training and a healthy contempt for all theories, Dunoyer de Segonzac is a kind of blend of Daumier and Toulouse-Lautrec, of Cézanne and Derain and—the Barbizon painters!—held together by a freshness and a gaiety and a seriousness all his own. Indeed, in de Segonzac we have a modern application of all that is best in French painting. His instinctive power of reducing a landscape to the very simplest elements of its composition reminds us of Claude le Lorrain's wonderful sketches in the British Museum, and those in the former Heseltine Collection now in Paris. His happy freedom and justice of line in the pen drawings recalls Daumier and the long succession of classic erudition freely used, of the greatest Frenchmen. In some of the pen drawings a seemingly fortuitous smudge of solid black is so perfectly placed as to rejoice the heart both of the most theoretical of Fauves and of the most passionate of Romantics; Delacroix himself would have found in him a painter of a rare understanding. In the loaded technique of his oil-painting he has yet a long way to go, but every year sees him nearer to the achievement of a great style, which defies imitation. It may be that he is only one among many rebuilders of naturalistic painting, for Boussingault and Kayser, Pequin and Luc-Albert Moreau are close beside him, but, with Derain, he stands out conspicuously in the championship of unaffected and lucid self-expression undimmed by preciosity or wilful obscurity; and we have to go back to Harpignies to find a Frenchman to whom water-colour is so natural a medium of expression, with its exacting demand for simplicity of design and directness of statement.

To sum up, for the last hundred years France has led the way in the art of painting, not so much by reason of actual achievement—though in this she has not been surpassed—as because of the deep and earnest thoughtfulness of her painters, who, like those of Italy in the 14th and 15th centuries, have brought reason to the aid of inspiration, and hard work and self-sacrificing devotion to truth as they have seen it, to the guidance of their personal aims.

DUNOYER DE SEGONZAC : Portrait of Girl in Blue

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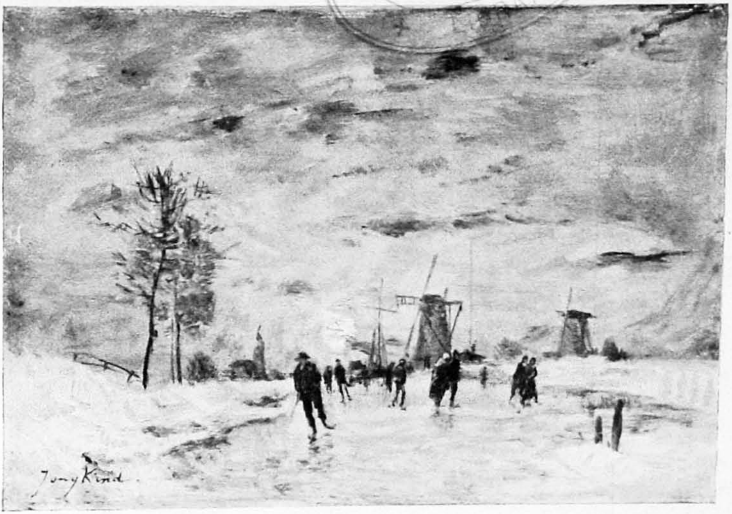

J. B. JONGKIND (see p. 170)
Skating in Holland

E. BOUDIN
Deauville

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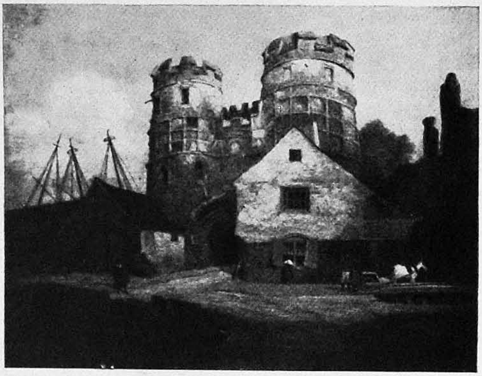

J. S. COTMAN: South Gate, Yarmouth

DAVID COX: Welsh Sheepshearing

JOHN CONSTABLE: The Hay Wain

CHAPTER II

THE ENGLISH SCHOOL

FROM the 9th century, when the Winchester School dominated Europe by its decorative justice and its vigorous illustrative faculty, down to the present day, the English painters who were not either illustrators or decorators may be counted on the fingers of two hands; and to the indigenous English painter style and method have always been secondary considerations, and theoretic principles of vision and interpretation, until very recent years, have mattered not at all.

It is a perfectly sound point of view. After all, technique, and the knowledge, or the belief, underlying it are the painter's own private affair. Turner, the most English of all English painters, did not care one brass farthing for any technical law or principle; all he cared was to get the result at which he aimed, and how he got it was his business, not that of his public or of his critics.

Such lawlessness has its disadvantages, of course—not so much from the artist's point of view as from that of the critic and the historian, and that, again, is their business, and not that of the painter: but it makes the task of writing this chapter very different from that of writing the history of the corresponding period in the history of painting in France, where, at least, every innovator had a definite starting-point at which he broke away from an existing order of things. In the anarchy of English art, every painter must be either an innovator or an imitator. There is in England no existing order, within whose limits he may find full personal expression, or beyond whose limits he may achieve it by rebellion and the establishment of a rival order.

The history of English painting, consequently, is that of an incessant guerilla warfare by individual artists on the solid and immovable mass of uninstructed public opinion, which regards the art of painting as a means of representing things—preferably pleasing things, and especially pleasing or prominent people: and what makes this unorganized warfare all the more hopeless, is the fact that a great many

of these lone warriors share that opinion, and only differ from their adversaries as to the way in which the thing should be done.

Thus it has come about that the outstanding figures in English painting are rather landmarks in a trackless country than milestones along the road of progress. We are accustomed to look back upon the 18th century as the great moment of English art, but at the end of that period of productive and critical and collecting activity, there is very little to show in the way of a coherent English School of painting. Even the great figures are few. Hogarth, Reynolds, Gainsborough, among portrait painters, and Wilson and again Gainsborough in landscape painting, are all that matter. Raeburn, as a Scotsman, stands apart in any case, and Romney and Lawrence were second-rate: but all these men were mutually antagonistic, both in outlook and method. They constitute a debating society, not a school. The ascendancy of such a bad painter as West, after Sir Joshua Reynolds was gone, shows that taste, not judgment, was the absolute arbiter of the fate of painting and painters in this country.

To the artists themselves, even to the greatest of them, the subject was the dominant factor. Hogarth was a satirist before he was a painter, though he was an earnest, if entirely empirical student of aesthetic. Reynolds was a portrait painter pure and simple: whatever his theories may have been, in practice his whole attitude towards his work was dictated by his attitude towards his subject. Gainsborough came a good deal nearer to evolving an aesthetic practice, but was impatient of all theories and principles. Wilson was perhaps the first English painter consciously to adapt his subject to an organized method of painting and composition, and in this he doubtless owed much to his contact with Vernet: but when he dared to apply his principles to the painting of non-classical landscape, he was crushed out of existence because his subject was unfashionable, and had to wait a century before English critics became sufficiently interested in fine painting for its own sake to recognize the value of his later work. Raeburn was another to whom

the aesthetic quality of his subject—the opportunity that it afforded for self-expression—was of more than secondary importance, with the result that for half a century after his death he disappeared altogether from the public ken.

It may be perfectly true that all these men had genius, and that it is the penalty of genius that, knowing no law, it can impose no law: if that is true at all, it is true of every race and every age. The pity, so far as England is concerned, is that its seed, scattered at random, falls on stony ground. It might have been hoped that such a crop of genius as that which sprang up at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries might have resulted in the foundation of a recognizable school of English landscape painting. With Wilson, Girtin, Turner, Bonington, Crome and Constable as a foundation, surely a broad-based and noble edifice might have arisen. Nothing of the sort happened here; but from Constable alone—or perhaps from Constable in conjunction with Bonington, who, after all, was a pupil of Baron Gros—it did happen in France. And there is no need to label Rousseau, Corot, Diaz, Daubigny, Millet and the whole of the Barbizon School and their successors with the big name of genius, to point the contrast with Nasmyth, Creswick, Shayer, Hilder, Linnell, Müller, Cox, de Wint and Niemann. Let us admit that there are great names in the English list as well as little ones: but what have they to do with Constable or Turner, or with each other? And carry the list further down, and place Jacque and Troyon beside Sidney Cooper and Peter Graham and Benjamin Leader, and it must be admitted that while France managed to base a logical development of landscape painting upon a passing glimpse of Constable, England could do nothing of the kind, but sank back to her one abiding tradition, that of faithful subservience to objective accuracy, tempered by false sentiment.

In England, Turner produced a couple of imitators in J. B. Pyne and William Severn; and almost a forger in James Webb. In France, he was strong enough to startle Monet and all the luminists into an earnest study of the principles involved in the rendering of light. Constable had

one faithful imitator, F. W. Watts (1800–1872), who added nothing of his own to the manner, and lost more than half of the principle, of Constable's impressionism; and it may be that Müller had some inkling of Constable's aims, as well as an admiration for his "effects." But the utter failure of even such sound painters as Stark and Vincent to carry on the message of Crome makes it clear that they did not even know that the message was there, but honestly believed that by learning from Crome the "tricks of the trade" they would become landscape painters of equal merit with their master. What France made of Constable we have already seen. That England made nothing either of him or of Crome is plain for all to see.

That, in spite of this lack of logicality and coherence, there are two heads under which the elements of aesthetic progress (as opposed to the mere chronological sequence of fashions in subject and style) in English painting can be grouped, may seem a contradiction: but when we speak of the English water-colour school, and of the Pre-Raphaelite School, we are talking of facts in the history of art which have an actual existence, are purely English, and are not without their importance in the history of European painting as a whole.

That the one is a grouping by process, and the other by principle, may be illogical, but that does not prevent it from being sound, especially in England. That no place can be found in either group for some of the greatest English artists is merely in accordance with the general statement already made. The great men who came under no heading are England's contribution to the world. The two movements—if we may call them so—that of the water-colourists, and that of the Pre-Raphaelites, are the two definitely traceable English influences on English art itself.

A century ago social conditions in England were not favourable to the development of a great art of painting. The reign of King George IV was over, and with it the fashion for the fine arts, so judiciously patronized by him, had gone, and a decade was to pass before the Prince Consort was to bring to this country its first inkling of the existence

of the Italian primitives. The host of portraits of nobodies by nobodies which has survived from the period immediately preceding the invention of photography betokens the arising of a new type of art patron, the prosperous middle-class and manufacturing element, which, with the increase in the use of machinery, and rapidly accumulated wealth, was daily invading the arena of art-patronage, hitherto the preserve of a class which had at least had the opportunities afforded by education and travel for forming taste, if not of acquiring judgment, in matters pertaining to the arts. In a way, this was all to the good, for it helped to clear the field of the forces of the pseudo-classical "grand manner," and to ensure at least a partial return to the honestly vulgar point of view which had found its great champion a century earlier in Hogarth. Unfortunately, in its frantic scramble up the social ladder, the new generation jettisoned its frankness, only to substitute a new and heavier burden of "refined" vulgarism, which was too flimsy to bear satire and too gross to be the vehicle of true romance, so that the genre painters of the 'forties reeked of domestic sentimentality and sanctimonious morality, which grew in intensity as the generation of the Regency and of the "Sailor King" died out; and the atmosphere of the Court did nothing to mitigate the blight. It was the same moral and social snobbishness which shrank from unalloyed realism, and so "the olden times" became a garden of transplanted Early Victorians which needed no Delaroche to cultivate it, so rankly did the sham mediævalism of Leslie and Cattermole and, later, of Pettie and Calderon grow in its perennial borders.

In short, the romanticism of the penny novelette was rampant throughout the land, and even great painters like Wilkie (and a great writer like Dickens) danced to its reedy tune.

Yet all this time Turner was painting, and from 1830 down to the middle 'forties was at the very zenith of his powers. In 1829 he had painted *Ulysses deriding Polyphemus*. In 1832 began the great series of Venetian pictures, among which the *Pictures of Titian carried in Triumph*, *San Benedetto*

and the *Sol di Venezia* stand supreme. In 1843 he turned the new factor in civilization (and in landscape), the railway, to account in *Rain, Steam and Speed.* Cotman struggled for a livelihood down to 1842, and then died. Constable was still alive, till 1837, and working to the last, by now acclaimed in England, but never followed; and the list of artists who devoted themselves mainly to the practice of landscape in water-colour is legion, and, moreover, contains some of the greatest names in English Art. Perhaps because of their great number, it is possible more or less to group the water-colourists of this period; but even so, it is astonishing how little continuity in their development can be discovered. Still more astonishing is the fact that neither in his own time nor until quite lately has Constable been recognized as being second only to Turner—if indeed he is even second to him and not his absolute peer—as a water-colourist. He himself regarded his water-colours rather as notes than as completed themes; and it may be that the majority of his contemporaries simply did not know that he used water-colour at all.

The descendants of the "stained drawing" tradition of the 18th century, who were still working in 1830, were such men as Varley, Glover, Havell and Prout. From Girtin sprang de Wint and Müller. Bonington may be regarded as having fathered a big family, of whom, on the landscape side, T. Shotter Boys was a direct associate and almost pupil; Vicars, Callow and Clarkson Stanfield were indirect derivatives; his figure-subjects find continuation in Cattermole, and there is a faint echo of him in Prout. James Holland was nearer to him in feeling than the majority of painters of Venice and Lombardy, and, in oil, comes near to him in depth of colour feeling. Cotman had no successors, in his mastery of the clean-cut pattern of his landscapes and seascapes, which, in the earlier *Greta Bridge* period, and in his Yarmouth phase of 1824, seem to go back to stained-glass for their basic design in balanced masses of transparent colour; not inappropriately, for Cotman was really the first water-colour painter to realize that it is upon the transparency of the medium that its possibilities of development are

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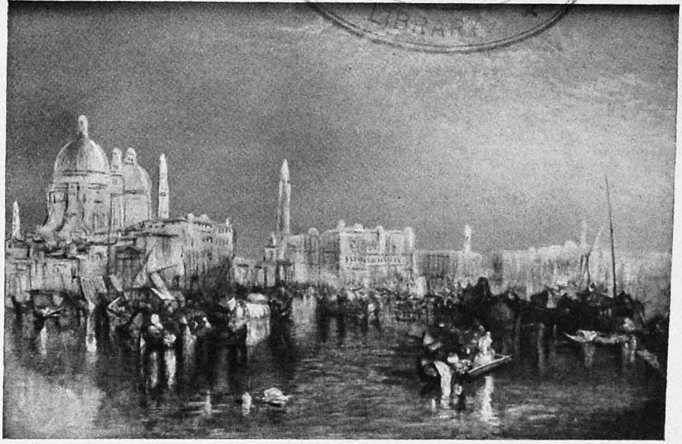
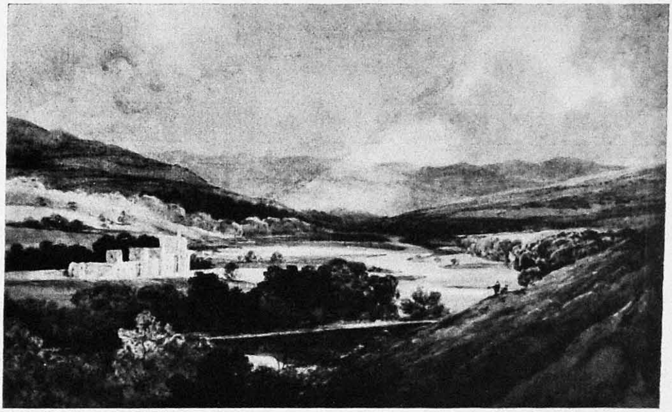
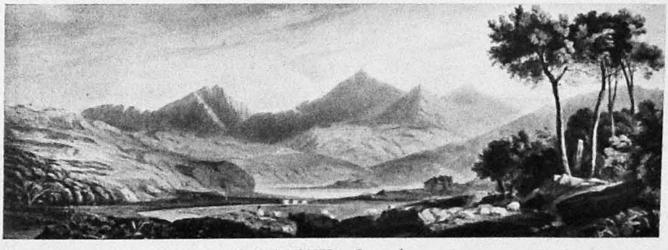


J. M. W. TURNER: Venice



THOMAS GIRTIN: Landscape (Water-colour)

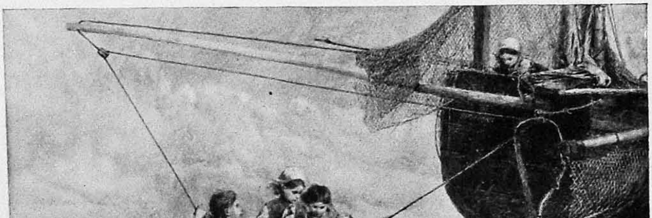


J. VARLEY: Snowdon

W. P. FRITH: Derby Day

By courtesy Messrs. Vicars

A. V. COPLEY FIELDING: Byland Abbey



By courtesy Messrs. Vicars

M. BIRKET FOSTER: Shoreham, 1865

based. Although Girtin had broken the spell of the "stained drawing," he had not grasped this fact about his medium, and so had thought in terms of opaque pigment, even while he used transparent colours to obtain the simplified masses of light and shade which give to his work a breadth and dignity comparable, because competitive, with the oil-painting of his day: and although de Wint and Müller realized to a greater extent than he, the value of broad transparent washes in obtaining an effect of atmospheric lucidity and aerial space, they still aimed at that mass and solidity of chiaroscuro which is the proper field of oil-painting, and missed almost altogether that charm of the patterned surface which water-colour is peculiarly adapted to discover and preserve. Although Cotman, with his feverish changes of style in the vain pursuit of popularity and a living, seems to lack the stability of purpose that we should expect of a master, there is no doubt that he was one of the very few painters of the early 19th century who had a really logical theory of painting—one of the very few, in fact, in English history who was really qualified to found a school. If proof be needed, beyond that afforded by the internal evidence of his water-colours, we have only to turn to his work in oil, such as the *Baggage Waggon* or *The Mishap*, to see that while his selective instinct chooses the same natural components, and lays the same emphasis upon pattern, as though he were working in water-colour—although, that is, the aesthetic personality at the back of the work is the same—the whole method of statement is changed to meet the needs of his change in medium. He neither uses water-colour as if it were oil, nor oil as if it were water-colour. The subject is subordinated, not only to a deliberately chosen aspect, but also to the limitations and possibilities of the medium as such.

Yet Cotman produced no effect whatever upon the painters of his day. Indeed, he still stands absolutely alone, as the only conscious stylist in the whole history of English painting in the 19th century. We have to go back once more to Constable, perhaps even to Gainsborough, to find the beginnings of the unconscious, untutored, and instinctive

translation into the terms colour-design of the caprices of the English climate, which constitutes the peculiar charm of English water-colour. The very fact that both these painters used water-colour merely to catch a fleeting impression ensured the simplification of design, and, in the case of Constable, with his wider range of pigments, the vigorous emphasis on balanced notes of colour, which lie well within the scope of the medium and are essential to that quality of spontaneity which constitutes its chief claim to be regarded as a complete means of expression; yet the extraordinary thing is that instead of progressing at once from its wonderful beginnings to still greater breadth and freedom, this splendid and essentially English art moved at first all the other way, towards niggling minuteness on the one hand, and strained and futile rivalry with oil-painting on the other. Robert Hills, Duncan, Robson, Turner of Oxford, were all water-colourists by instinct, and the first two especially were capable of wonderful directness and boldness of handling even in quite a small drawing: some tiny sketches by Hills, in the large collection of his work at Birmingham, are full of broad vigour, and of the sparkling quality of Constable; and Duncan's colour notes of barges on quiet waters have the calm, sure design of Cotman in his full maturity. Yet all these painters, in their "finished work" are fussy in drawing and in touch, overladen in colour, and either flashy or commonplace in design. Birket Foster could draw a "townscape" as fresh and lively as a Bonington, or catch the rush and glitter of a trout-stream, as his *Worms Cathedral*, at Birmingham, and the wonderful drawing, *Rocks on the Greta*, at Leeds, sufficiently prove: yet his fame rests upon his prolific output of fields and hedgerows, rendered to the last buttercup, and country lasses in print frocks of pale blue and pink and lilac, in endless iteration of minute craftsmanship. George Chambers made a firm stand against such sacrifice of his freedom, and his seas and ships are cleanly and simply stated in fresh, transparent strokes of colour; but he did not live long enough to sink into the rut of mere craft, and it must be confessed that his success rested rather upon his

accuracy in the recording of a ship's rig, down to the last halyard, than on his quality as a painter.

David Cox struck a more independent note than most of his contemporaries. Completely lacking in imagination, stereotyped in composition, hackneyed in his very simple, undramatic sentiment, he found the whole of his inspiration in the restless shifting of light and air over English fields and woods and strands: and, because of this genuine love of movement, he never could tie himself down to a tight and laboured rendering which would have defeated his very object. In his few figure studies there is evidence that he had achieved an instant control of the medium, and even in his quite early studies of leaves and grasses there is the same air of certainty; he had a great admiration for Bonington's work, and when he chose to copy him, as in the *Street in Verona*, at Birmingham, nothing but the authenticated signature, and the documentation of the drawing, would distinguish his copy from its original. Yet that even he came under the curse of "finish," his rough sketch of the porch of St. Philip's, Birmingham, and the "finished" version hang side by side at Birmingham to prove. Indeed, we can scarcely guess how great the English water-colour school might have been between 1830 and 1860, in exactly contemporary date with the Barbizon School in France, if it had not been cramped and smothered by the passion for machine-made accuracy of detail which was the natural outlook of a public impressed to the point of worship by the new and scarcely-tried capacity of machinery, and fortified in their demand for its reflection in art, by the smooth and sleek artificialities of the "Court School" of painters, headed by Winterhalter and Hayter.

In vain did Turner produce, almost in obscurity in his last years, the noble extravagances of the *Interior at Petworth* and the objectively incoherent fantasies of light, punctuated by formless but marvellously balanced passages of colour, that dismayed those who had learned painfully to respect the paintings of that period of more intelligible romance that began in 1832 and was drawing to its close soon after the *Burial of Wilkie* in 1843. It was to Maclise that the

public turned for the lofty sentiment and ordered design that they found in the *Play Scene in Hamlet* or *Malvolio and the Countess* (Tate Gallery), or in *The Sacrifice of Noah* at Leeds, and, as late as the 'sixties, in the great expanse of the *Death of Nelson* or *Wellington and Blücher*, in the House of Lords. So far as that goes, they were right, for Maclise had a great command of noble composition, and was a fine draftsman with a big decorative sense, and stands comparison with Delacroix in his genre: they were right, too, in loving their Frith, for his transcripts of life are typical, even symbolic, rather than mere reproductions of places and people, and he has a rare sense of dramatic composition. We need not make the mistake that his contemporaries made, of regarding the *Railway Station*, the *Derby Day* and *Ramsgate Beach* merely as catalogues of incidents, resting solely upon their pathetic or domestic or sentimental interest; for though these are there, and it was upon these that his enthusiastic public gloated in every detail, there was an artist behind them, weaving them into a wonderfully harmonious, decorative and indivisible unity of design.

But the English artist in the middle of the 19th century had to keep his aesthetic enjoyment very much to himself, in order to allow the layman to find full scope for the sentimental orgies, for whose indulgence he conceived the art of painting to exist. Otherwise, it is impossible to account for the avalanche of scorn and vituperation which descended upon the devoted heads of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, that one avowedly aesthetic native movement of the century; for the Pre-Raphaelites did no more than to insist that if the function of painting was to represent objects, it might at least do its work with some regard to truth and from direct observation, rather than from a set of worn and slovenly clichés. One would have thought that such a crusade would have appealed to the public that took so strong a view as to the representational function of art, but the fact is that, out of the compromise between artist and public there had grown up a regular system of formulæ, of tacit shirking of rigid copyism on the one hand, and of recognizable subjectivism on the other. Even in some of the water-colours

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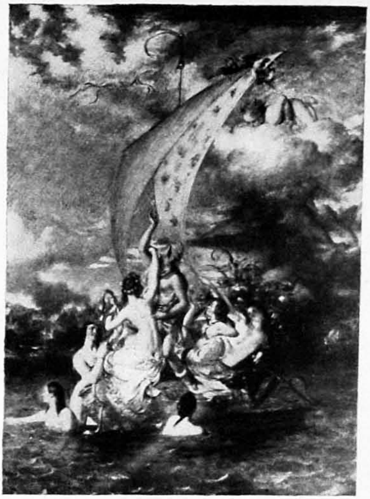

WILLIAM ETTY
"Youth on the Prow"

By courtesy Messrs. A. Ackermann

J. F. HERRING (Sen.)
Ready for the Change

WILLIAM MÜLLER
The Arab Shepherd

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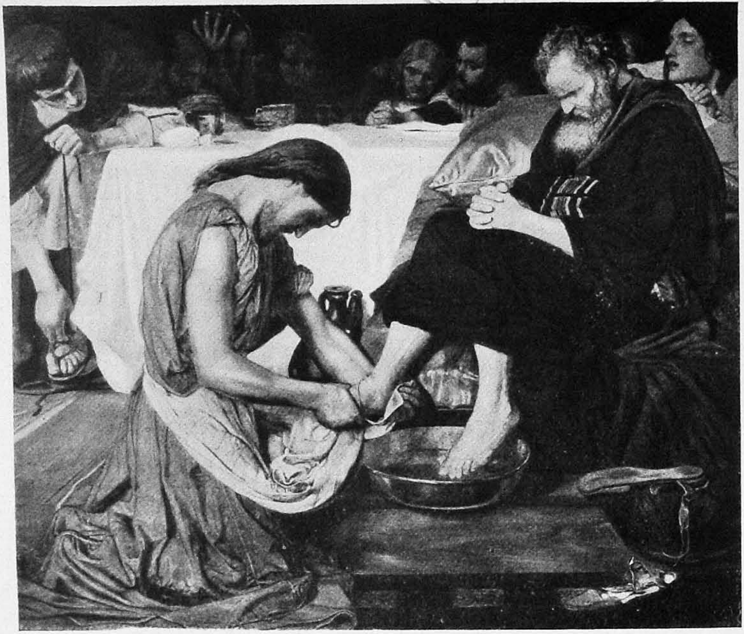

FORD MADOX BROWN: Christ Washing St. Peter's Feet

WILLIAM HOLMAN HUNT: Two Gentlemen of Verona

of Turner may be seen traces of the formal prettiness of the engraved vignette, and in those of Copley Fielding it is disastrously apparent. Fielding might have been a marine painter of great merit if it were not for the empty corners of his drawing-paper, which give even to his best pieces the appearance of being slung in an invisible hammock; and the same weak and slipshod curve runs through the whole of every composition. Prout's wearisome and shapeless peasants, the overloaded story-telling of Augustus Egg, the elaborate allegorical sentiment of Etty, the carefully sweetened realism of Wilkie and Webster, the spit-and-polish smartness of J. F. Herring's horses and coaches (but he could paint a horse, this stage-coach-driver and painter in one), and above all, the utter falsity of the humanized animals of Landseer, so complacently beloved of the public at large, had strayed farther and farther from reality, both in representation and in sentiment, until both painters and patrons had forgotten what the truth was like, and when, according to their lights, a few young painters set out to show them, they were very much annoyed.

Whether, without the intervention of the Brotherhood, and Ruskin's enthusiastic championship of its aims, the revolt against the arid formulæ of the Schools would have made any headway, it is difficult to say: but it is at least certain that the revolt in one way and another had begun before the Brotherhood came into existence. John Ruskin, too often overlooked as an artist, had produced drawings exquisite in their truth, and remarkable for their sure feeling for design in natural forms: he had published the first volume of *Modern Painters* in 1843, and the second in 1846, after his first visit to Venice, and had learned from Turner and Tintoretto that art consists in something more than formulated representation of generalized sentiment; Alfred Stevens, who had gone to Italy when he was but sixteen, had caught in Florence and in Rome, and especially in the study of Michelangelo, the rhythm of great design and purity of line, and had learned with Thorwaldsen to put it into practice; he had come and gone, between 1845 and 1847, from a teaching post at the School of Design at

Somerset House, and was already at work on decorative designs at Liverpool, the first commission of his great career. G. F. Watts, working in Florence, had painted, from 1843 to 1847, his large canvas, the *Story from Boccaccio* (Tate Gallery), which for all its classicism is utterly and convincingly sincere. J. F. Lewis (1805–1876), working in Spain from 1832, and from 1841 till 1849 in Rome, Athens, Constantinople and Cairo, and in the unknown lands of Sinai and Nubia, had built up for himself, far from the cramping influence of London, a style of painting almost identical with that of the Pre-Raphaelites who were yet to come, but with the added quality of pervasive light which none of them ever attained within the limits of their avowed creed.

Lastly, Ford Madox Brown (1821–1893), after study in Bruges, Ghent and Antwerp, had worked in Paris for three years without, however, being touched by any of the characteristic methods of the moment. It was in 1845, in Italy, that he fell in with the German discoverers of the pre-Raphaelite Italians; and his acquaintance with the primitives and the painters of the early Renaissance influenced both his colour and his drawing in a marked degree, for it sent him back to England fortified against the artificial mediævalism of the romantic historical school. Although he was never a member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, he was, quite unintentionally, the cause of its formation, for in 1848 Dante Gabriel Rossetti, then a student at the Academy Schools, struck by his cartoons for the Westminster Hall competition of 1844 and 1845, begged to become his pupil; and with his friend at the Schools, William Holman Hunt (1827–1910), and Hunt's friend, the precociously brilliant John Everett Millais, Rossetti formed the famous "Brotherhood," on which the older and more experienced Madox Brown kept a friendly eye, without committing himself to its declared principles.

These principles, however, were simple enough in themselves. On paper, they do not look like a revolutionary manifesto. To have genuine ideas to express; to express them by means of faithful observation of nature; to avoid

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London, Tate Gallery

D. G. ROSSETTI

Ecce Ancilla Domini

conventions and short cuts, but to learn from the sincere and honest endeavours of their predecessors; these are rules that one would think any honest painter must observe: and the fact that the observance of them by these enthusiastic children (for Holman Hunt was twenty-one, Rossetti twenty and Millais but nineteen) caused such a pother as it did among the critics, seems to show that the crusade was needed and came none too soon.

Moreover, though Madox Brown never adopted the label, he was a more consistent Pre-Raphaelite than either Rossetti or Millais: for neither romance nor sentiment ever dominated his outlook upon his subject as it did that of the two younger members of the Brotherhood. Rossetti, although it was to him that it owed its existence, only sought an outlet in painting for a poetic instinct that found far more accomplished expression in his verse. It had been impatience with the drudgery of the Schools that had sent him hot-foot to Madox Brown, and even when he was working side by side with him, and with the inexorably patient Holman Hunt, he could never muster enough application to become even a moderate master of his medium. Millais was a brilliant and ambitious youth, to whom the technique of drawing and painting came naturally, and who was shrewd enough to see in the tenets of the Brotherhood something that would give him a definite objective while he was finding his own natural bent; and only Holman Hunt from first to last made the strict interpretation of the rules almost as much a religion as he made his painting itself into an expression of his deeply religious nature.

Madox Brown simply sought to make of historical painting, not a picturesque and sentimental pageantry, but a plain statement of fact, as he visualized it in its mediæval setting; and in the world around him he sought for the beauty of familiar forms and of quite commonplace ideas. To him, this " beauty " meant, so far as the picture itself was concerned, well-knit design and truthful drawing and enhanced colour; so far as the ideas that it conveyed were concerned, careful selection of human types, strong char-

acterization without any touch of caricature, and the minutest observation and record of subsidiary detail, were made to serve his purpose. He idealized nothing, had no illusions about his subjects. Whether in a historical picture, like *Chaucer before King Edward III*, or in a contemporary genre subject, such as *The Last of England* (Birmingham), there is neither hero nor villain of the piece. Each one lives his part rather than plays it. Chaucer is simply a courtly poet reading his poem to a king; the Black Prince is no hero of romance, but a sick man weary of his surroundings; the emigrant and his wife are just two very ordinary decent people under stress of very natural emotion, in uncongenial surroundings; and the crowd on the deck behind them, though each one is a carefully chosen and representative type, have nothing of the stage chorus about them: and the design of this picture within its circular outline is as careful a study in the rhythmic arrangement of curves, as a schematized drawing by Claude Flight, to whose *Whirligig*, a drawing of women hanging out clothes on a windy day, it has a haunting resemblance of design.

Ford Madox Brown was fond of the curved boundary line. His most ambitious landscape, *English Autumn Afternoon* (Birmingham), is an oval picture: but the design is braced together by a strong horizontal element in the composition; and here again he demonstrates his immense superiority over the Pre-Raphaelites by the subtlety of his handling of colour deepened by advancing twilight—a problem that none of them ever attacked within the bonds of the Brotherhood, though Millais, turned impressionist in his last days, handled it superbly in *The Moon is up and yet it is not Night*—a picture that recalls in turn Constable and Rousseau and J. F. Millet, and yet remains entirely Millais.

Again, in *Work* (Liverpool, and a smaller version at Birmingham and the Tate Gallery in alternate years), Madox Brown's great decorative allegory of daily life, the curved upper boundary of the picture is essential to its unity of design: and here the painter's skill in the selection of types, and in the use of commonplace detail, is seen to conspicuous advantage. Definitely, in this work, he observes

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J. E. MILLAIS
The Blind Girl

A. HUGHES
The Long Engagement

SIR E. C. BURNE-JONES
The Star of Bethlehem

F. SANDYS
Mrs. Howell (Chalk drawing)

FREDERICK WALKER
The Plough

all the principles of the Brotherhood more literally than they ever did it themselves.

His was the unalloyed rendering of an idea by means of the close observation of nature. All Rossetti's work was tinged by a poetic eclecticism, which only observed nature through very arbitrarily selective glasses; and Holman Hunt was a religious painter before all, with a strong strain of allegorical imagery which enabled him to carry his point and enforce his message sometimes with startling emphasis. In his earliest work there is little trace of it, but a greater control of colour and design that he shows later. The *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Birmingham), painted when he was only twenty-four, is beautifully balanced in design, and singularly happy in its bold handling of colours that should conflict, but do not, by reason of the skilful breaking of their force by the rendering of textures. Less control of colour is to be seen in his *Christ in the Temple with the Doctors*; and there is deep feeling in the rendering of the varied expressions of the Doctors, painted from life in Palestine; but the design is less well balanced, and the note of purple in the dress of the Christ is forced almost to the point of becoming strident. *The Scapegoat* is perhaps his greatest work, for here, by literal and brutal truthfulness, he brings the symbolic aspect of the thirst-tortured, dying animal overwhelmingly to the fore. He is the only convincing religious painter of the century in England; and it is a pity that he should be more widely remembered for the picture in which, of all his work, his sincerity is most obscured by popular sentimental appeal—*The Light of the World* (St. Paul's Cathedral), than by the *Scapegoat* or the *Triumph of the Innocents* in which, for once, he has been able to find full expression of that mystic aspect of his religious nature which his adherence to literal representation of things seen usually kept severely in check, but of which there is an almost disconcerting glimpse in *May Morning on Magdalen Tower* (Birmingham).

Rossetti, it must be confessed, was too bad a painter ever to be able, after his earliest years, to do full justice to his poetic inspiration. His first picture, *Ecce Ancilla Domini* (Tate Gallery), is at once the sincerest in spirit and the most

completely successful in handling, for all its simplicity, of all his work. Its angular austerity, the high key in which it is painted, and the tense restraint of its sentiment, all contribute to the impression of sincerity—of spiritual reality—that it conveys. As his colour became more sumptuous, and the sensuous aspect of his nature becomes more apparent, his handling of pigment grows more effective than honest, and overcrowding has to do duty for compactness of design. It seems clear that the technical difficulties of oil confused him, for in chalk he was a fine draftsman; but that he was a colourist of rare sensibility is beyond doubt, and such pictures as *The Bride*, *Venus Verticordia* and *Beata Beatrix* display his qualities of poetic feeling to the utmost. His later work tends to become rather a reminiscence of than a development from the first enthusiasm of his youth, and his technical weaknesses become proportionately noticeable; but his influence towards the creation of a school of decorative romance was on the whole good. Simeon Solomon, Strudwick and Burne-Jones owe much to him, and in more recent times, Byam Shaw, Eleanor Fortescue Brickdale and Dorothy Hawksley, though perhaps more indebted to Millais, are to some extent in his debt.

Millais was the only one of the original trio who must have made a mark, Brotherhood or no Brotherhood, for he was a painter by nature, who needed no crutch to help him on his way. A medallist of the Royal Academy Schools at thirteen, and a full blown painter at fifteen, he brought to the aid of the Brotherhood a fully developed command of the craft. Whether he ever regarded the principles of Pre-Raphaelitism very seriously or not, he could at any rate put them into practice with more skill and certainty than Rossetti and Holman Hunt put together. His first Pre-Raphaelite picture, *Lorenzo in the house of Isabella* (Liverpool) takes one straight back to 15th-century Florence, and yet is crammed with life and character. It is no mere pastiche, but a new creation. The *Christ in the Carpenter's Shop* is a bold stride forward in vigorous realism. It earned the furious vituperation of Charles Dickens, which is not surprising, for in this

earliest phase of his work Millais showed no spark of sentimentality, but set down relentlessly what he saw, or visualized as the literal rendering of his subject. Yet the subtle symbolism of the wounded hand of the child Christ, and the tender solicitude of His Mother, leave, in the long run, a deeper spiritual impression than the more forced and obvious allusion of Holman Hunt's *Shadow of the Cross*, with its richer poetic inspiration. The *Ophelia*, too, is poignant in its effect by reason of its cold objectivity. There is not a trace of dramatic emphasis upon the drowning girl. The scattered flowers, the reeds, the willows, all have an equal demand upon our vision. The painter is not the interpreter of the scene, but its utterly dispassionate recorder.

That Millais, to say the least, was never obsessed by the principles of Pre-Raphaelitism, is plain enough: for his middle period was one of frank catering for popular sentiment. Such pictures as the *Order of Release*, the *Huguenots*, *Saved*, and the *Boyhood of Raleigh*, all in the Tate gallery, are simply story-pictures of the most blatant kind, scarcely redeemed by remarkably fine workmanship. *The Blind Girl* (Birmingham), which reverts to the Pre-Raphaelite formula, stands in a category of its own, and reveals him as a fine colourist and decorative designer; but the final impression left by the study of his life-work as a whole, is that he was an accomplished painter who never found an adequate reason for painting. His portraits for the most part lack both sympathy and penetration, and are miserably weak in composition; and indeed it was in the matter of composition that he suffered most from his early associations, for the Brotherhood in its jealous fear of artificiality mistrusted all compositional control of the subject: and while Millais was a fine painter and draftsman, he sadly lacked the sense of breadth and depth in composition; one of his most satisfactory pictures from this point of view is the *Widow's Mite* in Christchurch Minster, Hants, and this is directly based upon a study of Tintoretto; and it was only at the very end of his life, when the influence of the Barbizon School had at last penetrated to England, that he began to find himself, and to paint with feeling as well as skill. *The Moon is up, and*

yet it is not Night (1889), with more than a hint of Rousseau and Millet, stands to suggest that if Millais could have begun his career over again, he might have become a great artist as well as a skilful painter. As it is, though he stands almost alone among the English painters of the 19th century by reason of his technical command of painting and draftsmanship, his versatility, which amounted to instability, was fatal to the development of a really individual art, and he has left no abiding personal mark on English painting. The real work of the Pre-Raphaelites was carried on by men whose technical equipment was far inferior to that of Millais, but whose adherence to a definite artistic principle endowed their work with a cumulative influence. John Brett (1830–1902), in seascape, and J. W. Inchbold (1830–1888), in landscape, though men of minor importance, helped in their way to redeem their chosen type of subject from the woolly generalization with which it was threatened; Arthur Hughes (1832–1915), though inclined to be sickly in sentiment and harsh in colour, carried on, with Frederick Sandys (1832–1904), Madox Brown's tradition of careful and truthful rendering of actual objects, skilfully woven into ordered composition. The *Annuniciation* and the *Nativity* by the former, at Birmingham, have a spirit of poetic imagination comparable with the early work of Rossetti: and the latter, as a pure draftsman, comes very near to the standard of Millais himself. His *Autumn*, too, has something of the decorative richness of Holman Hunt's *Hireling Shepherd* and of Brown's simple veracity; but it is in his work in chalks, like the portrait of Mrs. Howell (Birmingham), that he is most conspicuously master of his medium, with an exquisite control both of tonality and line; in this medium, too, he is most obviously comparable to Madox Brown, whose *Convalescence* (portrait of Mrs. F. M. Brown), also in chalks, hangs beside that of Mrs. Howell at Birmingham. Of the older men, Martineau (1826–1869) was a close associate of F. M. Brown and an equally close follower of Pre-Raphaelite methods, as his *Kit's writing-lesson* (Tate Gallery) amply demonstrates; but he added nothing to the development of the school; nor did Charles Rossiter, whose

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A. STEVENS
Mrs. Mary Ann Collmann

G. F. WATTS
Sir Galahad

JOHN RUSKIN
Italian Landscape

GREAVES: Hammersmith Bridge on Boat-race Day

By courtesy of The Leicester Galleries

JAMES PRYDE: The Man in Possession

Brighton and Back for 3/6 (R.A., 1859), now at Birmingham, is a patient catalogue of carefully selected types, lacking in cohesion and pictorial quality.

The second chapter in the development of the school was opened by the meeting, at Exeter College, Oxford, of William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones, who collaborated with Rossetti in 1857, in the decoration of the Oxford Union with frescoes which, owing to the painters' ignorance of the fresco technique, have entirely perished. William Morris, although he became eventually a good, if rather stiff, decorative designer, was a poor painter and figure-draftsman, and ceased painting about 1862: but his activities as an imaginative writer, and his outstanding merit as a typographical designer, which resulted in 1890 in the foundation of the Kelmscott Press and the production of some of the most magnificent printing of modern times, made him a power in the history of English art, and in the production of stained glass and tapestry he had the collaboration of Burne-Jones with noteworthy results.

The later history of Pre-Raphaelitism is, in fact, almost entirely that of the manufacturing and decorating firm of Morris Marshall Faulkner & Co. (1852–1874), coupled with that of Burne-Jones. The activities of Morris & Co. constitute a very interesting and nationally characteristic attempt to bring art and commerce into co-operation; but this attempt, for all its value as an influence upon public taste, would have had little relation to the history of English painting but for the fact that it numbered Edward Burne-Jones among its coadjutors and adherents.

The most powerful formative influence upon Burne-Jones was Rossetti; but the younger man was inspired not by Latin exoticism, but by Celtic mysticism, and though in his earliest work the outward form is that of Rossetti, he soon shook off even the superficial similiarity and evolved a style, in drawing, colour and feeling, entirely his own, in which fantasy and literal observation, monotony of human form and type, and a bewildering variety and complexity of sentiment are curiously blended. If we set side by side a work by F. Madox Brown and one by Burne-Jones, say,

Chaucer reading and *King Cophetua*, we are confronted by a startling example of the incorrigibly literary tendency of English painting, even within the narrow limits of a group whose avowed aim was the establishment of the art of painting upon its own independent basis: and though these two painters, the first and the last exponents of pure painting in the whole history of the movement, excel all the rest in their grasp of the fundamental principles of pictorial design, it is the first of them, and not the last, who was really able to subordinate the non-aesthetic to the aesthetic aspect of his work. Burne-Jones, though he produced some of the most decorative of English painting, was first and foremost a sentimentalist, who used painting as a means for the satisfaction of his innate love of a romantic theme. Even in the very forms of objects portrayed in his pictures—armour, buildings, drapery and the rest, his " truth to life " is truth to a fantastic, imagined life of his own inner vision, pathetically and resolutely unlike that of the visible world about him. Burne-Jones and William Morris between them nearly undid all the work of their Pre-Raphaelite forerunners. By insisting upon the exotic character of art and romance in an age of machinery, they thrust it back into the curiosity-cabinet from which the honest, practical beauty-seeking of Madox Brown had caused it to emerge.

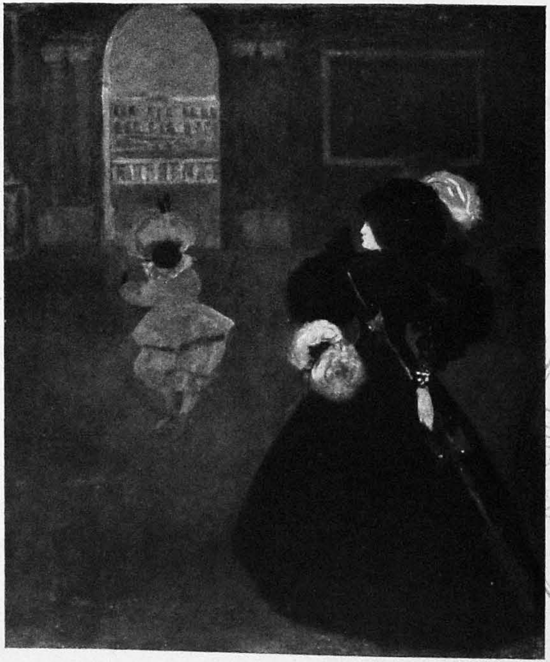
In Birmingham, Burne-Jones' native place, the work of Arthur Gaskin and Joseph Southall, and in London, that of Walter Crane, did something to mitigate the otherworldliness that was the bane of the later Pre-Raphaelite phase: but even so, the gulf between art and life, in the popular estimate, had been dangerously widened, and it has taken all the efforts of later men, like Byam Shaw and C. M. Gere, to restore it to its place in the development of English art. That it is, basically, the most important purely English contribution to painting since the impressionism of Constable and the romantic idealism of Turner, cannot be seriously disputed; that, in the craft-movement of Morris, it tended towards preciosity, and in the painting, and even more in the glass and tapestry design of Burne-Jones it came dangerously near to degenerating into a mere mannerism, is

equally true; but when, in the 'eighties and 'nineties of the last century, it had at last arrived at the goal of popular acceptance as the representative English art, its influence as a progressive force was by no means at an end; for, strange as it may seem, the invasion of England by the forces of French impressionism, which constitutes the next phase in our history, was in some part due to the stimulus given to the awakening in this country of an interest in the craftsmanship of the arts. It was as a wood-engraver, and as the founder of the Eragny Press, that Lucien Pissarro, the son of the great French luminist Camille Pissarro, first obtained a foothold in this country, and it would be idle to assert that such a landing-plank would have been available if William Morris, and, before him, the great group of Pre-Raphaelite wood-engravers, including Millais, Rossetti and Pinwell, had not prepared it.

The importance of the Pre-Raphaelites is, however, rather collective than individual. Apart from Ford Madox Brown, who was, so to speak, pre-Pre-Raphaelite, Millais, who was a brilliant hanger-on as long as it suited him to be identified with the group, and no longer, and Burne-Jones, who stands alone as a great master of romantic design, there was no painter of real importance among them. The great figures of the 19th century are very few, and if we add to the names of Alfred Stevens and G. F. Watts, that of Fred Walker (1840–1865), we have wellnigh exhausted the list of men who really matter. Stevens added to his classic purity in the rendering of form, both in sculpture and paint, a rare and delicate sympathy with the human aspect of his subject, which is displayed with penetrating force in his *Portrait of Mrs. Collmann* in the Tate Gallery. G. F. Watts, as much preacher as painter, made his magnificent control of colour and instinctive sense of vast design compensate for an incurable deficiency as a draftsman; and Fred Walker was able to infuse into subjects sometimes dangerously sentimental, the rhythmic unity of Millet and the glowing warmth and romance of Giorgione; but beside these there is nothing but an unceasing, placid flood of academic competence, which occasionally casts up a remarkable draftsman,

such as Frederic Leighton, who, if he had never meddled with colour, might have earned the world's gratitude. There is, in the National Art Library, a pencil drawing by him of a branch of a lemon tree that is worth more than all his creamy-skinned maidens, and his carefully posed and staged Greek tableaux. Even if he had allowed the Pre-Raphaelites to communicate to him some of their early simple sincerity, he might have turned his great talent to better account, as his *Procession of the Madonna of Cimabue* amply shows. But a world that acclaimed the acclimatized Dutchman, Alma-Tadema, a great painter, for his imitation of marble, and could not see beyond Millais, Herkomer, Ouless and Holl as portrait painters, and that mistrusted Sargent for his freedom of the brush and for his vivid characterization in portraiture, could not be expected to get the best out of any artist whose real strength lay in pure and unassuming craftsmanship. No doubt it was easy enough to turn Leighton aside into the broad path of fashionable sentimentality disguised as classical erudition; but that he had better in him than he ever showed is surely proved by his pathetic remark to Watts. "Watts," said he, "if I could paint and you could draw, what an artist we should be!" For long enough the academic sky was placidly clear. Whistler was the first cloud on its horizon, a little cloud no bigger than a man's hand. That was in the middle 'seventies; but before the 'eighties were well established the cloud had grown to threatening proportions. By a mere freak of fortune, however, it was not the academic world which suffered the first blast of the storm. It was the furious onslaught of Ruskin which diverted it towards the territory of his own protégés, the only thoughtfully striving English group of painters; and so the issue became confused and falsified into an absurd conflict between impressionism and "truth"; and since the impressionism of Whistler was, after all, nothing more than an extremely delicate suscepti-bility to tone and design, which expressed itself by the acute and exact selection of essentials from a wholly subjective point of view, and was not in fact *visual* impressionism at all, the quarrel led to nothing useful to either side;

W. NICHOLSON
The Brown Veil

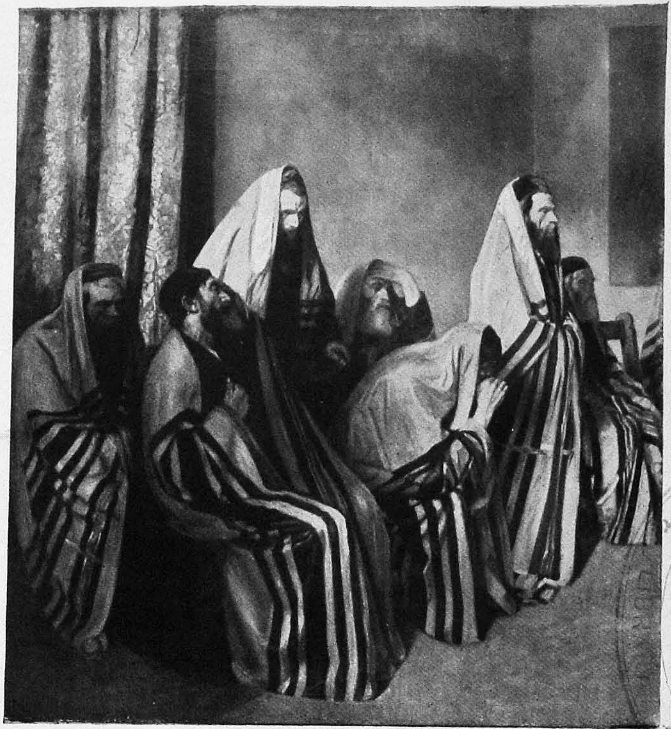


A. BEARDSLEY
Caprice

DHA... MUDALIAR ... LIBRARY

By courtesy of P. M. Turner, Esq.

CHARLES CONDER
The Keyhole



W. ROTHENSTEIN
Jews Mourning in a Synagogue

DHAN… LIAR

and how little real basis of difference there was between them is suggested by the fact that Walter Greaves, Whistler's naïve and uncultured " pupil," when he was not blatantly imitating Whistler's manner without the smallest comprehension of its inspirational source, was painting pictures (such as his *Hammersmith Bridge*) which might equally well have been produced by a faithful follower of the earliest Pre-Raphaelites; and his *Green Dress* is, in fact, much nearer to Millais than to Whistler.

It was when Walter Richard Sickert (born 1860) came into contact with Whistler, and from him learned to turn to Degas for his means of pure self-expression, that the influence of the French impressionists began really to make headway in England. Walter Sickert, as he was called then, was an impressionable youth when Whistler was the focus of all lively art interest in London, and in his earliest work, while he was a student at Heatherley's School, there is a strong note of " Whistlerism "; but Whistler's reduction of his theme almost to a flat arrangement of tones in a single plane did not afford the scope necessary to Sickert's more vivid and mobile manner of seeing, and he found in the infinite subtlety of varied and broken tones in restricted scales of colour, of which Degas was so great a master, a better outlet for his intense vitality; in some of his early work such as his Dieppe street scenes there are experiments in vivid colour, but for the most part his range is narrow and cold: but its luminosity (which has nothing to do with luminism) is pervasive; in his favourite music-hall and theatre scenes, his handling of deep shadow, broken by sudden points of light, gives, even in the small scale of his pictures, an astonishing impression of enclosed space and atmosphere: there is as much human understanding, without sentimentality, in his grimly bourgeois interiors—such as the gruesomely human *Ennui*, or the poignant commonplace of *Suspense*—as in any Daumier, or in the best of Forain's later oils; but while his method is manifestly derived from a close study of Degas and Manet, and a sure knowledge of the principles of the luminists, it is entirely, sometimes disconcertingly, his own. Almost, perhaps quite,

the first English impressionist, he is to-day the foremost, and by far the most scholarly, of them all.

But by the time that he had reached full maturity, England was entering upon an epoch of unrest and change in all the arts, and indeed in national outlook upon all things, both at home and abroad. It is no mere accident of fashion that has lately brought "the 'Nineties" into prominence, for that was a decade of remarkable enhancement of all artistic activity, even to fever-point. The trouble had already been brewing in the 'eighties, as the foundation in 1885 of the New English Art Club showed; perhaps after all it may be laid at Whistler's door, for there can be no doubt that he did much to import a certain liveliness into art controversy; and though the "aesthetic movement" of the 'eighties was in its outward manifestations largely a degenerate offshoot of later Pre-Raphaelitism, it was strongly tinged also with a preciosity which was an unconscious imitation of Whistler's consciously impudent "superiority complex," as it would probably have been called yesterday. However that may be, Oscar Wilde emerged from it, and Aubrey Beardsley gave it final expression. To couple the literary *poseur*, the very embodiment of flashy superficiality and vulgar cleverness, with the uncanny genius, England's only master of pure line and austerely economical design, is of course entirely unjust and misleading; but the fact remains that they were products of the same set of conditions, and that the one was the sedulous ape of Whistler and the other his unconscious but triumphant complement. Whistler despised Wilde, but he paid the boy Beardsley the compliment of loathing him, until one day he looked through the incomparable drawings for the *Rape of the Lock*, and said, "Aubrey, I have made a great mistake. You are a very great artist"; whereat Beardsley burst into tears, and Whistler, deeply touched, soothed him, saying again and again, "I mean it."

In those days, the general interest in the arts may not have been conscious; public opinion may have been a little contemptuous of the "intensity" of the few, but the process of penetration was going on, despite the blatant complacency of the last phase of Victorianism which culminated in the

Diamond Jubilee of 1897, and in the flaming nationalism of the Boer War. It could hardly have been otherwise, in a decade which produced such poets as Francis Thompson and John Davidson and W. B. Yeats and Rudyard Kipling; that saw the entry of Max Beerbohm, " the incomparable " —whether as essayist or caricaturist—Bernard Shaw, and G. K. Chesterton; H. G. Wells, J. M. Barrie, George Moore and Grant Allen, each in his way was giving to the novel a new life and purpose. Will Rothenstein descended upon Oxford in 1893, hot from Paris, as Max Beerbohm has recorded, to make his wonderful series of Oxford Portraits. William Nicholson and James Pryde, as the *Beggarstaff Brothers*, introduced into the poster world its first note of artistic design, to which even the rank commercialism of Drury Lane had to bow, when Phil May recognized the advertising value of the rejected *Cinderella* poster. Phil May himself, after much adversity, had become not only the admiration of critics but the joy of the " man in the street "; in the pages of *Pick-me-up*, that most brilliant little weekly paper, whose undeserved reputation for " naughtiness " ensured its popularity with a public that knew little and cared less about art, a new standard of drawing in line became familiar, with the work of Phil May, S. H. Sime and Dudley Hardy. Thus, the general public, on its hoardings and in its journals, became accustomed to look for, and to some extent to recognize, that " something different " which hangs about all work of honest artistic endeavour, and the body of those who could really appreciate good work increased proportionately. The *Yellow Book*, the *Savoy*, the *Pageant* and the *Dome* made of thought and talk about the arts something more than a fashion, and though the thought was mostly muddled, and the talk more purple than penetrating, it was all to the good, for it replaced prejudice by curiosity in respect of painting, at a moment when there were painters ready and waiting to supply the demand for something new.

Not that the older school of serious painting and drawing did not come in for its share of the sunshine. The 'nineties saw the multiplication of the " precious printing-press."

The Kelmscott Press produced its greatest triumphs in those days. The Vale Press and the Eragny Press, under Charles Ricketts and Lucien Pissarro respectively, made their mark, and the last phase of Pre-Raphaelitism took a new, if short, lease of life, in the best achievements of Walter Crane and Burne-Jones.

But when all is said and done, the spirit of the 'nineties is summed up in the antithesis presented by Aubrey Beardsley and Charles Conder on the one hand, and William Nicholson and James Pryde on the other—as who should contrast Oscar Wilde and Rudyard Kipling. Aubrey Beardsley's precocious genius in the control of pure line and the distribution of masses of black and white in a design at once decorative and intensely expressive of a fantastically just sense of balance (which showed itself no less in that strange literary jewel *Under the Hill*), is entirely personal and inimitable; but it is merely the inevitable reaction of the cult of fine craftsmanship, first fostered by Ruskin and then by William Morris, upon a vivid mind in a sickly body, which veered uneasily between the sensuous and the ascetic aspects of beauty, without achieving a wholehearted devotion to either; and this was a perfectly natural state of mind for a sensitive nature living in the hothouse atmosphere of the *fin de siècle*, when the jargon of preciosity, and the pose of decadence were the hall-mark of those who, against the popular background of robust vulgarity, strutted as the elect. True, the majority of these assumed a vice, although they had it not, because vice was fashionable; but in Aubrey Beardsley they found an exponent who was childlike in his simple sincerity, and who happened to be an artist of a singular purity of means. That he was equally sincere in the passion of his death-bed repentance at the age of twenty-six is all in the picture.

Charles Conder expressed, not so much the sensuousness as the insincerity of his world. A slovenly draftsman and a deliberate devotee of triviality, he was a colourist of rare sensibility and a born decorator—but always on a little scale and from a little outlook. His work is the very embodiment of laziness made beautiful, of carelessly seen form and

SIR WILLIAM ORPEN
The Red Shawl

AUGUSTUS JOHN
The Smiling Woman

DHANAKOTI MUDALIAR
LIBRARY

DHANAKOTI MUDALIAR
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By courtesy of Barbizon House

HENRY TONKS
The Rent in the Gown

P. W. STEER
Chepstow Castle

deliberately emasculated colour; and a puff of keen wind would blow it all away, as though it mattered no more than the silken fans upon which it was so often painted. That the same decade should have produced William Nicholson's woodcut portrait of Queen Victoria, his *Morris Dancers*, and the woodcuts of the *Almanack of Twelve Sports* is merely evidence of the fact that the cramping influence of the cult of craftsmanship, the offspring of the aesthetic movement of the 'eighties, was dying a natural death of inanition, and that the great body of the national spirit was untouched by preciosity in any form. A connecting link was William Strang, who touched in turn upon the strong simplicity of his master Legros, the craft of the Morris School, and the literary and decorative romance of the Pre-Raphaelites. The disastrous fall of Wilde had much to do with the reaction in the direction of the exaltation of realism, and the healthy influence of Sickert, Wilson Steer and Rothenstein in presenting the public with real food for controversy in the form of the impressionistic rendering of familiar, common, entirely unexotic life, did the rest. The artists whom the turn of the century saw making their way were men of visual rather than of mental imagination, Lavery, Orpen, Arnesby Brown and Alfred Munnings, who had no direct relation to the French impressionists, and Augustus John, who, with Orpen and McEvoy, may be regarded as the outstanding justification of the Slade School.

This is as much as to say that the coming of Alphonse Legros to England in 1863, his election as Slade Professor in 1876 and the foundation of the New English Art Club in 1885, were responsible for the arising of a New English Art. It is almost true. If we add the second head of the Slade School, Professor Brown, and his distinguished pupil and successor, Henry Tonks, the peer of Walter Sickert and Wilson Steer as an English impressionist, and almost alone as a painter of interior light, we have as complete a foundation for English painting in the 20th century as can be defined in short compass.

The great claim of the Slade School to be regarded as the

nursery of modern English art is the fact that its representative pupils are all painters who have been taught to handle their medium with confident skill, but who have not been cramped in the development of their own way of seeing and painting. They are not cut to a pattern, and when the New English Art Club came into existence avowedly as the outlet for the new individualism, English painting had at last achieved the means best suited to its peculiar temperamental basis: for, as it has already been pointed out that there is no logically coherent or continuous "English School," it need only be added that there is not necessarily any community either of aim or of method among the members of these two essentially English institutions. Each of the long and distinguished list is a law unto himself, however much they may have derived from a common source of inspiration and instruction, and however much they may have learnt from personal association with one another.

Of Sickert we have already spoken. His impressionism, though French in its origin, is entirely English in its development and application. William Rothenstein, whose student days at the Slade were followed by a period at Jullian's in Paris, is no impressionist, but a painter of classical severity and calmly considered vision, a portraitist of rare sympathy, and a landscape painter whose delicate sense of the variation of light and colour enables him to present a score of aspects even of a single tree in the changing hours and seasons of the year. His "impressions" are thoughtfully analysed, and then re-synthesised for statement in paint. Certainty of aim is his outstanding characteristic, and his influence is deep and widespread among the younger artists of to-day. Henry Tonks, again, is a luminist in all but the actual technical process of statement, for he substitutes for the arbitrary analysis of light that was Monet's method, an inspired power of colour-selection, and a broad but broken touch which invests his pictures with a light that belongs absolutely to each object upon which it falls. Form holds light together in his pictures, instead of being dissolved in light.

But although Sickert was the deliberate adapter of French

impressionism to English needs, and Henry Tonks evolved from the essentially English Pre-Raphaelite creed an impressionism of his own, it is Wilson Steer, more than either of these, who must be accepted as the English impressionist in a national rather than a personal sense. He, too, at first, was drawn to Pre-Raphaelite detail of vision; it would almost seem that the Englishman feels the necessity of seeing everything before he begins to leave out anything. His early training in Paris reacted very little upon him; it would be hard to guess a pupil of Bouguereau at Jullian's in the painter of Ronald Gray (1919). It is in fact far easier to catch a glimpse of Albert Moore in *The Muslin Dress* (1910): and it was not till long after he had left Paris that an exhibition of French Impressionists, Monet, Pissarro and Renoir, in London, gave him a clue to the natural bent in him, which had already shown itself by his association in 1886 with the New English Art Club, rather than in his actual work. The influence of Whistler preceded that of the Frenchmen, and the portrait of Mrs. Cyprian Williams (1891) leaves no doubt of its value, nor, on the other hand, of the essential independence of Steer. *Boulogne Sands* and *A procession of yachts*, a year later, bring both Monet and Renoir into the picture, but in a recognizably English translation; and the marvellous blend of swift vision and careful elaboration in the superb *Mrs. Raynes* (Tate Gallery) could only have been achieved by an obstinately English (and basically "Pre-Raphaelite") painter. In the series of *Castles* from 1896 (*Richmond Castle*) to 1906 (*Chepstow Castle*), the broadening and deepening process of his rendering of light and atmosphere progresses triumphantly: but above all, mastery of composition remains in the memory as the unvarying strength of this great painter. Whether in a piece of flickering sunshine like *Children paddling*, of the earlier impressionist phase, or in the fully developed command of form and light of the *Balcony* (1909) now at Johannesburg, or the rich colour and wide expanse of the *Bridgnorth* and *Ludlow* landscapes, these luminous splendours hold together unerringly, despite the tenuous form and diffused light of many of them. In the *Rainbow* (1901)

it is as though Constable were reborn, not to a repetition of his work of a century ago, but to a new lease of life and a new progress; and in *Dover Harbour in War-time* (Imperial War Museum) the passage of the years has fulfilled that great promise; and the intensely English quality of Steer is shown by the fact that in his water-colours, often mere faint touches of pale colour over swift pencil lines, there is the same sense of sure construction as in the most finished oil.

Sir William Orpen (1878–1931) is in another category. He appeared at the Slade School in the last years of the 19th century, already a brilliant and finished draftsman and painter. From 1900 onwards he took his place in the first rank of the Exhibitions of the New English Art Club. With a touch as broad and sure as that of Hals, with boldly original lighting of his portraits, like that early one of Lady Headfort in black, against a white background, he was a virtuoso from the first. There was a touch of Goya in him, too, in Goya's phase that was tinged by the decorative influence of Fragonard; and of Goya the satirist—for Orpen's satire can be a fierce and scathing thing. The *Barrel-organ* of 1905, now in the Savile Club, is an example of the one, *Man versus Beast*, of the other: and the satiric aspect, though it seldom creeps into his individual portraits, shows elfishly in his great *Signing of the Treaty of Versailles* as it showed terribly in the earlier version of the *Unknown British Soldier in France*. If, in some of his more recent portraits, dexterity has almost outrun sincerity, this is not due to any loss of power, for where his interest is aroused, sympathy leaps out into marvellous expression, as in his portrait of the dying *Ray Lankester*. It has been said that he could not paint war, but such a statement overlooks the passionate protest of such pictures as *The Mad Woman* and *The Return Home*.

Almost exactly his contemporary at the Slade, Augustus John, on totally different lines, and with a totally different process of development, has become, from being an uncannily sure and brilliant draftsman and etcher, a painter so uneven both in technical and temperamental quality, as to be the despair of critics and historians. John of the early

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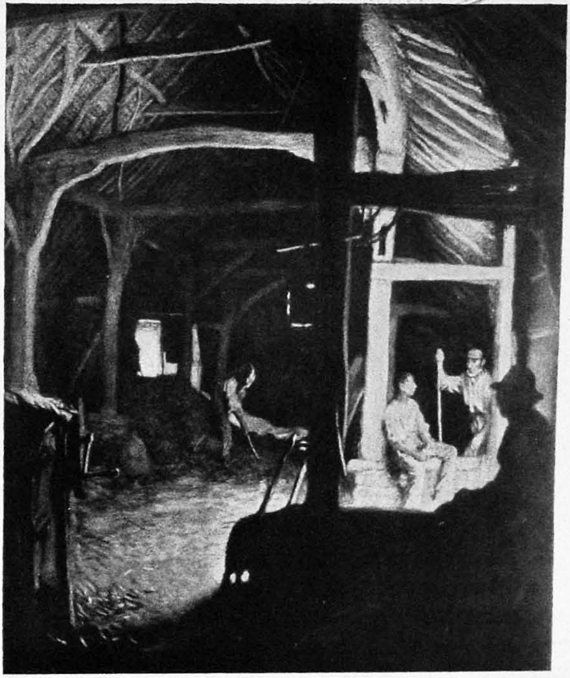
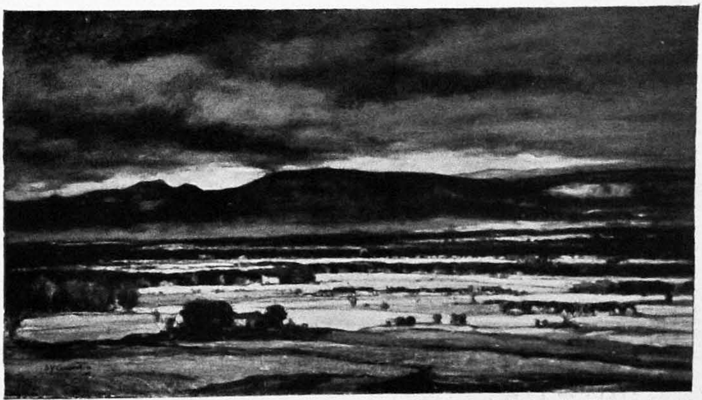


SIR GEORGE CLAUSEN
The Tithe Barn



By courtesy Messrs. P. & D. Colnaghi

SIR D. Y. CAMERON
Autumn in Menteith

DHANAKOTI MUDALIAR

H. LAMB
Lytton Strachey

Ph. Paul Laib

A. McEVOY
Viscountess Henri de Janzé

WALTER BAYES
Finale of the Ballet

LUCIEN PISSARRO
Notre Dame de Constance

gipsy subjects had such vigour and freshness, both in colour and characterization, that it was difficult to account for the impression of sardonic insolence they left behind them. John of the *Smiling Woman* (Tate Gallery) has all the monumental permanence and engaging mystery of a very great master indeed. John of the huge mural decoration *Galway* (Tate Gallery), takes one back to Giotto, and the painter of the *Souvenir of El Greco* seems to have entered straight into the hectic personality of the Greek master of Spain. John of the *Madame Suggia* lets us down with a crash into the depths of shameless dexterity, although his portrait of Lord d'Abernon manages to combine dignity with even more aggressive bravura; and the painter of the portrait of Lord Spencer seems to have lost all sense of dignity, whether of colour, design or handling, though the same year saw the exquisite command of all these things in the portrait of Tallulah Bankhead, one of the most masterly English paintings since Gainsborough's *Perdita*. At least, we may safely say that here, when he makes the effort, is a painter to be numbered among those who make history.

If Ambrose McEvoy (1878–1927) had lived, he would have lived down the easy label given to him by so many critics, that of the "twentieth-century Gainsborough." To him, too, the Slade School gave the freedom of his own genius, that produced, from his eclectic study of the French impressionists, and more particularly of Monet and Renoir, and also of Rembrandt and Vermeer, a brushwork both broad and airy, and a draftsmanship of unerring firmness, shrouded though it might be by iridescent colour. His drawing was implicit in his brushwork, and the structure of forms was expressed rather by knowledge than by actual line. Thus, his was a fluid art, always ready to adapt itself to a sudden change of view, an afterthought of inspiration. Only a few days before he died, he saw suddenly how to give greater life and movement to the nearly finished portrait of Lady Wimborne, and with almost incredible swiftness and sureness, swept the broad lines of a new rhythm across the picture, so that the figure seems to move lightly across the

field of vision: and so the canvas remains, unfinished but alive, for he never touched a brush again.

His was the mentality of a water-colourist, swift and slight and sure: and his water-colours have a play of light and tint, even in the narrowest and coldest range of colour, that conveys the impression of a sudden glance. Like Vermeer, he loved the light-play of a picture with a mirror in it, such as the *Ear-ring* in the Tate Gallery: but he was also a landscape painter of happy insight into the play of diffused light in misty atmosphere, though little of his work in this direction has been seen. Rather strangely, he was a reverent student of the Venetian masters, with whose warm richness his own work has so little affinity, and a treasured work of his student days was a copy of the *Noli Me Tangere* by Titian. The slightness of his work, and its shifting colour, now flaming, as in the *Miss Lois Stuart*, now cold, as in the portrait of Mrs. Claude Johnson in black, or the earlier *Maud*, now brilliant, yet subtle, as in the unfinished *Miss Gladys Cooper*, have given him a reputation of haphazard genius that he would have been the first to disclaim. He was a thoughtful painter, one of the scholars of the craft, and his early death was a loss to English painting that no follower can repair.

Of a more freakish genius was Charles Sims, who repressed, through a career of successful and often brilliant portrait painting, a mysticism that at last broke its bounds and revealed him as a passionate devotee of abstract beauty of colour whose struggle for expression had been overlooked even in his later portraits, like that of Lady Rocksavage. There can be little doubt that his balance was overthrown by the humiliation of success in a genre which seemed to his supersensitive mind a waste of his powers, but from which he could not break away.

Glyn Philpot has grown, through phases of an archaizing classicism, like the *Pilgrimage of the Soul*, and of uncompromising realism such as the *Tired Acrobats* and the *Street Accident*, to a place beside Holman Hunt in the small category of genuinely religious painters; but his *Annunciation*, and the great *Epiphany*, have nothing in common with

the Pre-Raphaelite either in conception or in execution. They are intensely personal in their mysticism, like the telling of a personal experience rather than the visualizing of a historic incident. In both the strange device of omitting the principal figures altogether, and so putting the spectator in their place in relation, in the one picture, to the angel messenger, and in the other, to the adoring Magi, produces an almost disconcerting impression of intimate participation in the scene. Celtic imagination, allied with naturalistic but idealized representation, gives to the work of this painter a character quite its own, which is transmuted, in his portraits, into a kind of exaltation of character difficult to define, but easy to recognize.

These are the chief among the many painters whose work constitutes our present link with the new freedom and individuality which came to English art at the opening of the century. Many names could be added to the list—that of Clausen, the interpreter of English landscape and English dawns and sunsets in terms of a luminism adapted from that of Monet; Lucien Pissarro, the direct translator into English of the art of his great father Camille; Arnesby Brown, pupil of Herkomer, owing little to the Anglicized German save a bold confidence in the handling of pigment, but deeply in the debt of Troyon for his rich rendering of great landscapes, from which as time went on the finely drawn cattle gradually disappeared, and the lowering skies and luscious fields of English summer became the dominant of the theme; D. Y. Cameron, of the Glasgow School, who, from the grey quietude of his early panoramic landscapes, has come to be the painter *par excellence* of the dramatic and lurid purple and scarlet of Scottish hills and sunsets. John Lavery, born in Belfast and most widely known as a painter of beautiful women, though his best work is that of sun-splashed or colour-variegated interiors, such as the *Jockeys' dressing room at Ascot* (Tate Gallery); W. W. Russell, who, alike in early landscape and later portraiture, has a delicacy of touch in the rendering of diffused light and subtly harmonized colour; and Cayley Robinson, in whom the reminiscence of Puvis de Chavannes, best seen in his

large mural decorations, is tempered by a tenderness of sentiment and intimacy of atmosphere far removed from the remote calm of the French painter.

But for the beginnings of the work of the painter who, more than any other, has established the claim of this country to have produced an artist of international significance, owing nothing to any of his immediate predecessors either at home or abroad, we must go back to William Morris, and through him to the Pre-Raphaelites and their earlier contemporary, Maclise. Frank Brangwyn, it is true, soon tired of his studies with Morris, and went to sea. But he had learnt enough to see in all things, firstly, colour and design, and secondly, rhythmic form. A draftsman of that strenuous breed to which belonged Tintoretto, Michelangelo, El Greco and Alfred Stevens, a colourist of tropical magnificence, and a decorator like none other, he has been in turn the painter of the crowded movement of gay markets in Spain and Africa, the sweat and labour of broad backs and mighty muscles amid the complex machinery of northern lands, the huge sweep of ancient bridges, the burnt redness of sun-steeped towns and mountains, and the barbaric glitter of Indian pomp; tall ships on blue waters, the romance of piracy, Venice in glory, Messina in the chaos and human anguish of earthquake, have been his various themes. Huge still-life paintings of sumptuous fruits and flowers have been his vehicle for colour: and through all of these has run the abiding note of ordered decoration, resplendent but controlled. His *Stations of the Cross* at Johannesburg are a turmoil of life and movement, but never break away from the inexorable restraint of a preordained design. His *Venetian Funeral* (Leeds Art Gallery) is a poignant human episode, but it is still more a sombre yet glittering structure of colour and form. For all its flamboyant pageantry his work is never blatant; for all its close-packed content it is never crowded. For all its apparent hazardry of mingled colour and form it is never, in its ultimate effect, confused. Frank Brangwyn is a phenomenon to be reckoned with in the world's history of decorative design.

Again, it is impossible to overlook, in the work of Gerald

SIR JOHN LAVERY: Pavlova (La Mort du Cygne)

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FRANK BRANGWYN: Venetian Funeral

C. R. W. NEVINSON : Steam and Steel

By courtesy Messrs. Tooth

PAUL NASH : "Bouquet"

JOHN NASH : Landscape

Brockhurst, a totally different artist with totally different views, the formative power of the pre-Raphaelite tradition. Brockhurst's earlier training at the Birmingham School of Art brought him into contact with Gaskin and Southall, and with the work of Burne-Jones, and he worked in close association with Henry Rushbury, to whom, as to himself, fine draftsmanship was both a natural instinct and an article of faith. That the two men should have developed on such different lines from identical beginnings is outstanding evidence of the essential independence of the English artist; for while Brockhurst's portraits, such as that of Henry Rushbury now in a private collection in America, and the *Young Womanhood*, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1931, take us into the atmosphere of the studio of Leonardo da Vinci, with their severe scaling down of colour and their impeccable drawing and modelling which is yet full of vitality, Rushbury finds expression in pencil-work which makes almost magical use of the possibilities of that medium, without a trace of cleverness or of overstrain. The movement of crowds, the patterned statement of open spaces surrounded by buildings and variegated with human action, and the free geometrical design of timberwork, such as a temporary bridge or a big scaffolding, are subjects which he handles with all the certainty of the great pencil-men of a century ago, men like Cotman, Müller and Cox, and with a greater liveliness and more unconscious charm. Muirhead Bone has more weight and solemnity of touch, and deeper feeling; William Walcot imparts into his rendering of buildings and ships a greater imaginative fantasy; but all these men worthily uphold the creed which is almost the only tradition of English art, that the thing seen is material enough and to spare for beauty, and that there is no aesthetic need (however interesting and exciting it may be) for exploration, whether scientific or empirical, of the underlying principles of plastic form, or for the translation of emotional reactions into diagrammatical design.

Indeed it is scarcely necessary to trace in detail the course of the English reaction to the cubist and futurist experiments of France and Italy, for they have been for the most part

rather unintelligent imitations, leading nowhere. Of all the English painters who have been attracted by these theories, only a very few have made any serious attempt to understand their aims; and it is sufficient evidence of the superficiality of the English attitude towards them that it was not until after cubism and futurism had run their artificial course in England that the work of Cézanne, from which cubism had been derived, began to receive serious attention from more than a very few.

However, exceptions to this general rule exist. Wyndham Lewis, a natural master of rhythmic line, and a bold and thoughtful colourist, studied cubism to some purpose, and put it to forceful use in such works as his portrait of Ezra Pound; but it was no more than a success of curiosity, and has not added anything of significance to his powers. Henry Wadsworth, after some initial experiments in pure cubism, took what he wanted of the practice, to give solidity to his vigorous rendering of the unlikely beauty of slag-heaps and pitheads, and C. R. W. Nevinson produced, just before the War, and in its earlier stages, a highly personal blend of cubist and futurist elements, by means of which he achieved remarkable success in the rendering of dramatic aspects of war. To call him either a futurist or a cubist would be absurd, but that he has gained enormously in strength by the absorption into the body of his work some elements of both theories is indisputable. In *Machine Gunners* (Tate Gallery) cubism, in *Going over the top at Dawn*, both the massive quality of cubist design and the movement of futurism, and in the fitful light of *What shall we do with the drunken sailor?* pure futurism, play an important part; and though he now dispenses with the more obvious methods of both, he has learnt much from his serious study of their underlying principles.

William Roberts, on the other hand, has evolved a representational "cubism" of his own, which is more compelling than convincing: his work has both vitality and sincerity, and also a very striking solidity, but it is difficult to see why such drastic methods are needed to arrive at comparatively commonplace results.

DUNCAN GRANT
Flowerpiece (Zinnias)

Claude Flight is the only true futurist that this country has produced, and he has not merely adapted futurism to his own needs, but has developed it into something much more valuable to graphic art than it was when he took it in hand. Seeing that the effect of kaleidoscopic movement achieved now and again by Severini was due to the presence of a geometric rhythm in the arrangement, he has reduced this rhythmical element to rigidly controlled order. His *Whirligig* takes its text, so to speak, from the bellying curves of washing in the wind; but it becomes in his hands an ordered and inevitable design of intersecting arcs. In *Porpoises*, a drawing in black chalk with light washes of colour (Birmingham Art Gallery), the rolling bodies of the porpoises and the crisp curves of wavelets caught by the wind are the starting-point of an intricate but absolutely geometric sequence of harmonic curves, stiffened and controlled by an underlying structure of straight lines, barely suggested but rigidly observed. The result is startling in its simple naturalism. It is as though one saw, not only the movement, but the cause and method of it as well. The art of Claude Flight carries the aesthetic aspect of futurism far beyond any point reached by its originators, and is a genuine contribution to progress in the principles of rhythmic design.

In England, however, since the War, the most noticeable features in painting have been, on the one hand, a belated discovery of Cézanne, not as a starting-point for cubism, but as an exemplar of vigorous co-ordination of representation and tridimensional design; and, with characteristic illogicality, the English painter has tried to combine with the massiveness of Cézanne the decorative flatness of Gauguin, and to bring both within the limits of the traditional English representation. Whether the result is a muddle or a discovery is debatable. In the work, at any rate, of Duncan Grant it seems justified by a certain degree of success: but in the upshot it is as a colourist that Grant will ultimately command respect. In other words, in his earlier phases he was hampered rather than helped by trying to follow the lead of painters whose aim was not clear to him, and he is

now emerging from his trials as a decorative painter of figures and still-life, endowed with a massiveness in the rendering of solid forms which enhances the effect of his rather heavy sense of rich colour. Vanessa Bell, with less solidity in the rendering of forms, has a more interesting sense of colour harmony, and a greater originality of design. For the rest, the patient efforts of Mr. Roger Fry to elucidate the principles of cubism have for the most part fallen on uncomprehending ears, for to tell the truth English painters have never had much patience with abstract principles, and Mr. Fry himself is much too good an Englishman to succumb to the spell of ideas. His own use of the principles of cubism, as in *Poinsettia*, is eminently practical, and enhances, rather than obscures, descriptive representation of his subject, and the use of cubistic elements of design by Walter Bayes was a passing phase only, for all its success. The real progress of English painting has been and seems likely to continue to be upon the lines of highly subjective impressionism; Miss Ethel Walker has brilliantly adapted the means of Sickert to her own peculiar needs, which are those of a delicate suceptibility to character in portraiture, and to the mobility of colour in changing light; and the brothers Paul and John Nash have found a singularly wide range of expression in water-colour landscape, the former in the tortured and brutalized landscape of the war in Flanders, and the latter in the fields and woods of peaceful England. Spencer Gore, who died in 1914, had already found, in Richmond Park and in the streets of London suburbs, subtle qualities of colour and atmosphere which placed him right in the front rank of English impressionism, and Henry Lamb, with his *Death of a Peasant*, had shown that harsh drawing and simple truth of statement could rise to tremendous heights of human pathos. Lately, John Nash has gained greatly in strength both of design and colour, and in turning from water-colour to oil has revealed a monumental quality in his work that had been obscured by the slighter medium. Ethelbert White, too, both in water-colour and oil, has a power of reducing quite simple naturalism in landscape to striking and admirably balanced pattern in flat colour,

WALTER RICHARD SICKERT
Ennui

SPENCER GORE
Richmond Park

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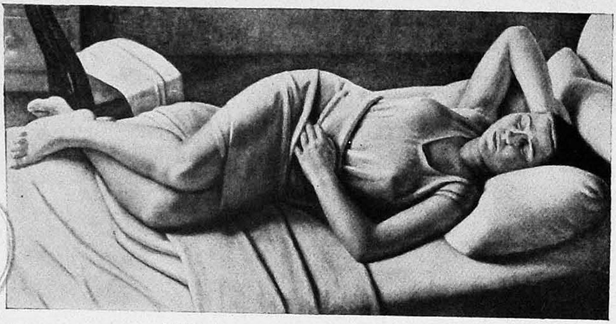
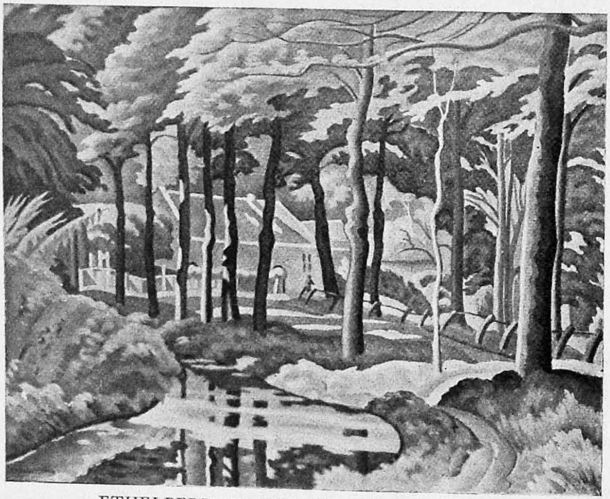
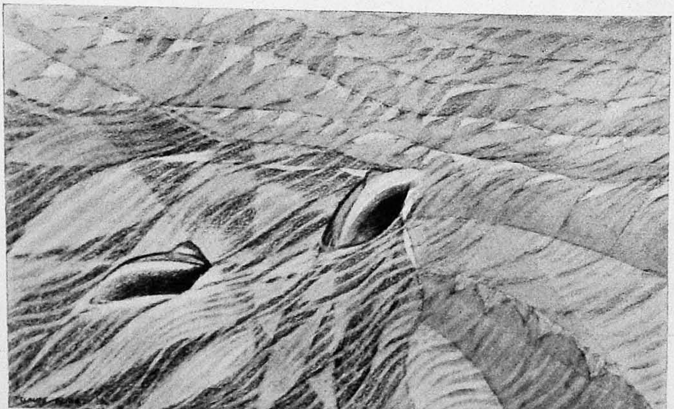


MRS. DOD PROCTER: Morning



ETHELBERT WHITE: The Farm by the Brook

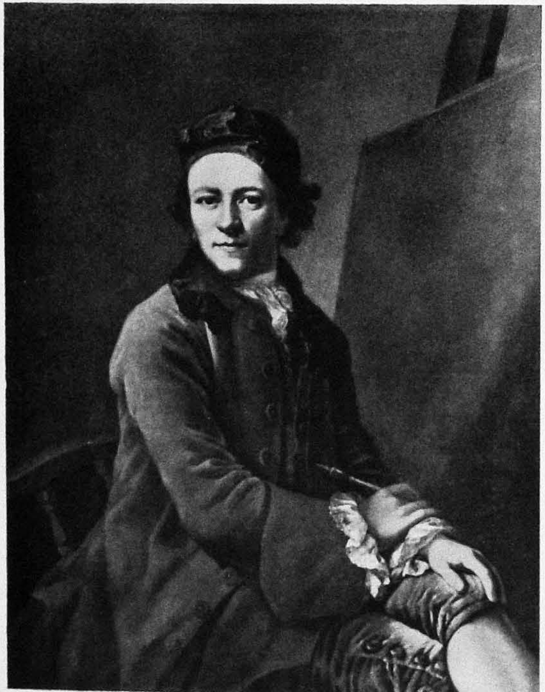


CLAUDE FLIGHT: Porpoises

without any sacrifice of the third dimension; and the same may be said of Henry Lamb's post-war work, of which, so far, the outstanding example is the *Stretcher-party in Macedonia* (Tate Gallery), which has far more spatial value than his delicious *Portrait of Lytton Strachey*, also in the Tate Gallery; for the latter is a tapestry-like expanse of subdued tones, while the former, in spite of a more conventionalized scale of hard colours, uniformly high in key, recedes boldly, giving room for the still, massive forms with which it is filled.

It would of course be possible to add almost indefinitely to the list of names of painters who are playing their part in the evolution of a national art; and in doing so we should merely arrive at the conclusion that has already been stated, more than once in these pages, namely, that there is not, never has been, and never will be, an English national school of painting, for the simple reason that English painters are intensely individualistic, and cannot work in groups upon a common principle; that personal impulse rather than reasoned theory is their natural starting-point; and that while on the one hand they have as a general rule an almost pathetic reverence for the doctrines and experiments of France, they cannot bring themselves in practice to obey the principles of the doctrines, or to accept the logical deductions from the experiments, but simply regard them as raw material to be twisted to their own personal ends. That Mrs. Dod Procter, for example, has been strengthened by the knowledge that cubism exists is probably perfectly true, but to call her a cubist would be ridiculous; a little empirical cubism, a little of its absolute antithesis, luminism, and a lot of careful, unimaginative, unemotional observation at first hand, produced *The Model*, which is exactly what its title suggests, namely, the treatment of a human being as the subject of a careful rendering of the " tactile values " of solid form; and that is as near to the intellectual attitude towards painting as any English painter is ever likely to get. Whatever English artists may learn from abroad of the means of painting, they remain in the long run faithful to their own individual end, which is in ninety-nine cases out of

a hundred the expression of their enjoyment, emotional or aesthetic, of the material objects that they choose to paint, in the aspect in which they choose to see them. That Charles Ginner, who draws a whole street a brick at a time, and a wood twig by twig, without ever losing the unity of the whole, should be a fellow-member of the London Group with Wadsworth and Roberts is sufficient evidence of the incorrigible individualism and healthy tolerance of English painters; though their aims may be the same, and though they may agree about all the ultimate verities of art, each follows his own path regardless of the rest, without conflict or co-operation. So, there is no " English School," and the collective influence of English art upon the outside world is small; but all the same English art to-day is a very living thing, and the present century, when seen in long perspective, is not likely to suffer by comparison with the one which went before it.



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A. GRAFF
Portrait of the Artist

WINTERHALTER
The Prince Consort

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M. LIEBERMANN
The Needlewoman

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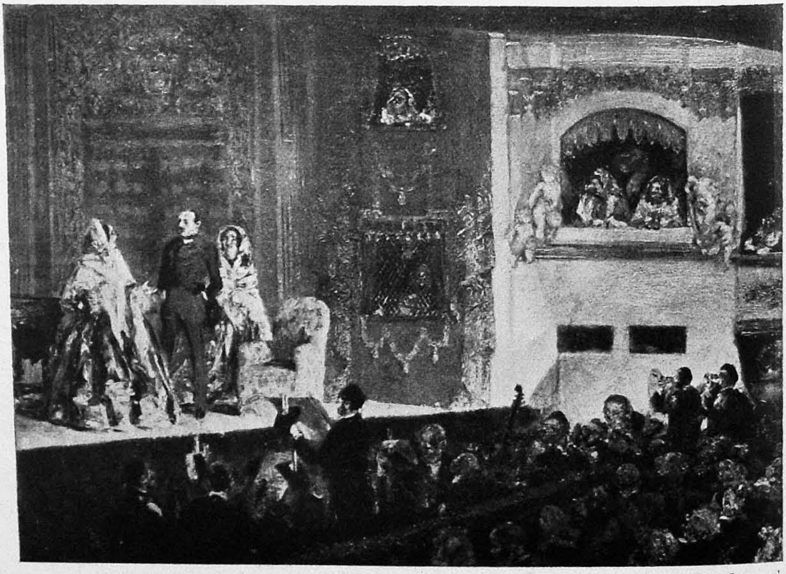
F. v. LENBACH
Kaiser William I



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A. v. MENZEL
The Theatre

CHAPTER III

THE GERMAN SCHOOL

THE task of compressing within the limits of a consecutive narrative the story of German art during the last hundred years is somewhat complicated by the fact that it is the history of a racial rather than of a national phenomenon. Not only must we perforce include in its definition the art of a number of states, which a century ago had a separate existence within the German federation, but also Austrian and to some extent Swiss painting are so closely allied to it, both in source and in inspiration, as to be virtually inseparable. The supremacy of Munich among the schools simplifies the problem to some extent, however, and the absorption of states into the Reich has latterly almost removed it. In the brief review which follows, no attempt has been made to do more than indicate the general trend of Germanic artistic feeling and expression, and to trace its debt as a whole to foreign contemporary sources.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the classicism of Winkelmann, of Goethe and of the Italianized painter Tischbein had imposed upon the instinctive romanticism and sentimental realism of the German character, a pseudo-classical medium of expression which was wholly unsuited to the racial outlook. In portraiture, to be sure, the vigorous realism of Graff defied this superimposed formula, and the portraits of Edlinger were also healthily prosaic, if rather officially dull; and in the portraits by Karl Joseph Stieler (1781–1859), of Goethe and of Beethoven, not merely the visual, but the sentimental aspect as well, of the subject, is carefully, if rather timidly stressed; but the extraordinary rise to international fame of Winterhalter (1806–1873) would be inexplicable if it were not realized that here was a painstaking—and fairly successful—attempt to invest the commonplace magnificence of modern courts with the grand manner of David's *Serment des Horaces*, to make " a fine leg for a silk stocking " do duty for the heroic limbs of ancient Greece and Rome, and, withal, wherever possible, to exalt the glories of respectability and domestic bliss.

How genuine, and how admirable, was the sentiment, and how well adapted to its expression was the less classically sophisticated native art, that looked back rather to Holbein than to Raphael, can be seen in Ferdinand Waldmüller's (1793–1865) *Portrait of a Lady*, painted in 1836, which depicts a charmingly ordinary woman, with all the purity of line and quiet certitude of composition of Ingres, but without a trace of conscious style. The same echo of the shrewd and penetrating directness of the great 16th-century German is seen in the portraits of Otto Runge (1777–1810), and in the delightful *Portrait of the Artist's Sister*, by R. F. Wasmann (1805–1886), and can be traced not only further back, but also right down to contemporary instances; and it is in this close and careful rendering of personality, by sheer cumulative force of faithful representation, that during the first half of the 19th century the German portrait-painters found their natural and hereditary strength; for when, as in the case of Ferdinand von Rayski (1806–1890) and the widely-known Franz von Lenbach (1836–1904), an attempt was made to achieve either a more imposing style or a more individual technique, the result was a lowering of the work to the level of a mere historical record of features and attitudes, wholly lacking in humanity and conviction.

When, on the other hand, the German painter allows his love of minute and delicate craftsmanship to find its proper outlet in a lingering delight in literal form and texture, or in diffuse and even grotesque fantasy, he rises to heights of his own, which there are few to share. Hans Thoma, though best known as one of Germany's most truly inspired landscape painters, might well have roused the envious admiration of Holman Hunt, in his *Self-Portrait* (Dresden); the quiet nobility of the boldly fronting head and shoulders, the delicate drawing of the hand and the interwoven colour and faithfully rendered detail of the orchard background make, with the intricately plaited border of flowers and the frieze above, of the heads of children, a delightful feast of fancy both in colour and form, set in a composition of rare structural solidity. Scarcely less, though in the very

different field of large decorative design, does the Austrian but Munich-trained Moritz von Schwind (1804–1871) derive his strength and charm from a frank return to traditions that are nearer to Dürer than to any foreign source in any age. His astonishing *Kuno von Falkenstein* (Leipzig) is frankly and triumphantly Teutonic and Gothic both in its compression of all the essentials of a narrative within the limits of a decoration, and in its faithful rendering of individual natural forms; and Thoma again, even when he seems most to betray knowledge of the great masters of the Cinquecento, as in *Der Wächter vor dem Liebesgarten*, infuses into his subject, for all its far-away romance, a flesh-and-blood vitality which checks all tendency to compare him with our own Pre-Raphaelites; for while to these fantasy and romance were of another world, an unattainable dream, to the German they are as a memory of scarcely yesterday, as real as the commonplace of to-day. Only Holman Hunt, in the *Triumph of the Innocents*, ever achieved the reality of feeling that is plain to see in Thoma's rendering of the far more remote idea of his *Puttenwolke* (Leipzig).

This, then, is the keynote of German art—an intense enjoyment of the subject, whether from the point of view of sentiment or vision, and an almost naïve conviction of its objective reality, however far it be removed from actual experience. The same instinct which enabled a mediæval German wood-engraver who had never seen a camel to "evolve one from his inner consciousness" to illustrate a treatise on natural history, and that brought all the beasts of the Apocalypse to the beck of Dürer's pencil, enables Franz von Stuck (*b.* 1863) to draw a sleeping satyr, sprawling along the branch of a tree, to the very life, and Wilhelm Trübner (1851–1917) to paint the portraits of a pair of centaurs with the same fidelity as if they were a pair of modern German citizens: and even in the short period in the early years of the present century, when German artists played with abstract form and pattern, and let loose their instinct for barbaric splendour of pure colour, they still preserved their faithfulness to sentiment, and to the clear statement of the source of their impulse to paint.

Yet, rather perversely, and in defiance of the natural genius of the race, it was the spurious classicism of Anselm Feuerbach (1829–1880) that held the field in the academic schools of the mid-19th century. In his thoughtful and dignified drawing, and surely balanced composition, Feuerbach did justice to his study at Munich, of Raphael and the great Venetians, and sometimes, as in *Dante and the Noble Ladies of Ravenna* (Karlsruhe), arrived at a happy balance between that frigid academicism and his own natural romantic leanings; and in his *Medea* (Berlin) an idealized naturalism very nearly takes the bit between its teeth: but for the most part his painting has the accomplished and bloodless monotony of school-work by one who has nothing more to learn, and dare not put his knowledge to independent use.

This depressing phase was carried on to its logical conclusion of polished ineptitude by Gabriel von Max (1840–1915) and, with an incongruous intrusion of vigour both in naturalism and in decorative quality of design and colour, by Georg Müller-Breslau (1856–1911); but it had no real roots in German soil, and was choked out of existence by the growth, luxuriant almost to rankness, of realistic romanticism, than which no better example can be cited than von Stuck's *Amazon and Centaur*, with its disconcerting vitalization of classic sculptural forms.

More restrained in sentiment and in closer touch with the realities of the classical tradition was Arnold Böcklin (1829–1901), whose long residence in Italy might have been expected to rob him of much of his national character. There is indeed in his *Shrine of Hercules* almost a suggestion of Nicholas Poussin, but it is no more than a suggestion, and the famous *Island of the Dead* is purely Germanic in its romanticism, but endowed with a dignity which is seldom attained by the German romantic realist.

The work of Marées (1837–1887) strikes a note intermediate between the frigid classicism of Feuerbach and his successors, and the vigour of Stuck. With a far more delicate sense of compositional balance than either of them, and a freer method both in drawing and painting, he arrives at a quality of grace rare among German painters,

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F. VON STUCK: Sleeping Faun

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HANS THOMA: Landscape

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A. FEUERBACH: Dante and the Noble Ladies of Ravenna

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M. VON SCHWIND: Kuno von Falkenstein

but leaves an ultimate impression of weakness which the charm of his work cannot wholly redeem from the charge of insincerity.

It is rather to landscape painting that we must turn to find a clear and consecutive series of landmarks in the development of German painting, at any rate down to the last decade of the 19th century, and here again we are at once carried back to the German achievements of the 16th century to find a parallel for the intensity of human sentiment which fills the quiet and, at first sight, unimpressive portraits of places painted by Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840) so much of whose work was calamitously destroyed by fire at an exhibition in Munich, not long ago. It is true that in the landscapes of Albrecht Altdorfer, there is generally a human element, as in the wooded *Landscape with St. George* (Munich) and the *Poverty and Riches* (Berlin), but this is incidental and separate in its appeal from the love of landscape for its own sake which was his primary inspiration. This love of landscape is neither sensuous, like Constable's joy in the sparkle of rain-laden trees and fresh air, or Turner's rapturous response to colour and light, nor temperamental, like that of Corot or Daubigny or any of the Barbizon painters, who translated natural beauty into terms of their own outlook upon life as a whole. It is purely romantic and patriotic, and reflects a passion for landscape neither for its own sake nor as a medium of self-expression, but as the symbol of the identity of the German with Germany. Consequently, German landscape painting, from Altdorfer down to Lovis Corinth, has a simplicity, a directness, a freedom from technical preoccupations, which makes it the purest and most universally intelligible expression of the German artistic genius. The peaceful expanses of Friedrich's mountain scenes, such as the *Riesengebirge* at Stuttgart, or the *Bohemian Landscape* at Dresden, are as often as not unrelieved by figures or buildings; the graceful peaks, rising in carefully graduated sequence of tones from uneventful foregrounds of subdued green and brown into clear and peaceful skies of the tints of dawn or evening, strike a tender, hospitable note. They "belong," so to

speak, most intimately: and when, as in *Rest in the Hayfield* (Dresden), a human note is introduced, in the lolling figures among the haycocks, and the distant castle rising dark before the low hills, the air of peace that pervades all is as much that of the landscape itself as of its occupants: and in *Wiesen bei Greifswald* (Hamburg), the distant town and the broad fields with their grazing horses and the easy sweep of the foreground lines are all part of an atmosphere of quietude that seems inseparable from this gentle painter's art. Even when he strikes a more dramatic note, as in *Sunrise at Neubrandenburg* (Hamburg), with its glowing clouds, that seem to engulf the tall towers of the town, or in the broad shoulders of the mountains in *Aufsteigender Nebel* (Munich), or, most of all, in *The Cross in the Mountains* (Dresden), the ultimate quality is that of repose and quiet contemplation.

Rather more topographic in the rendering of detail, and sometimes weak in composition, his Austrian contemporary Anton Radl (1774–1852), whose subjects are drawn mostly from the Taunus district, near Wiesbaden, is nevertheless almost as intimate in his attitude towards his subject; and Carl Robert Croll (1800–1863), a Saxon, who lived at Prague, and painted mostly in Bohemia, has the same unsophisticated directness, though his touch is bolder, his balance of masses more emphatic, and his sense of composition more developed. Thus it was not a mere accident of individual character or locality which produced this type of romantic landscape, but a racial outlook common to all Germans.

With bolder colour, a finer sense of design, and more imaginative fire, Hans Thoma carried on the succession. There is not merely space, but bigness in his renderings of mountain, forest and river. They are literal in their detail, but vibrating with light and strong in their subtle emphasis of structure; and in addition there is fine decorative quality in his control of linear design, which is well seen in a landscape sketch at Kassel, in which a row of poplars ranged across a flat valley, at the foot of rocky cloud-capped mountains, knits the whole together with satisfying finality. His

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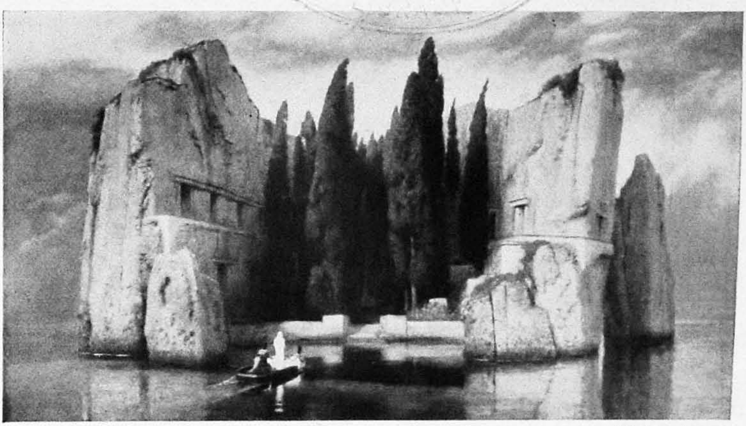

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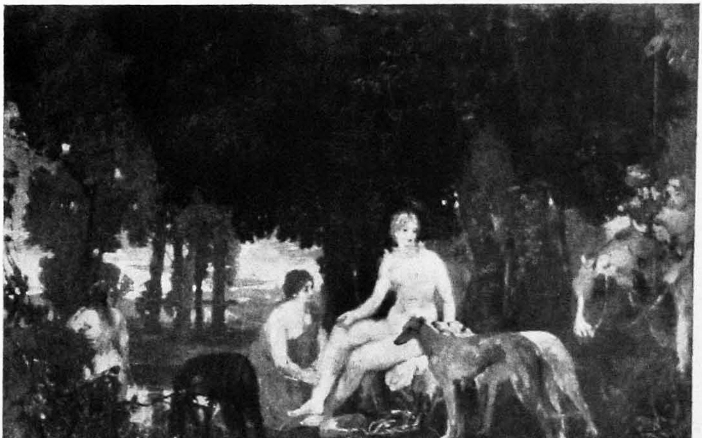
ARNOLD BÖCKLIN
Island of the Dead



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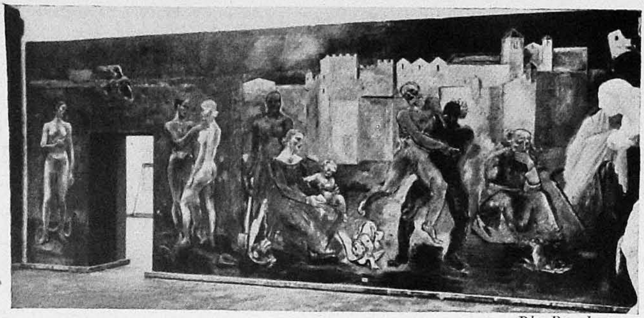
H. MARÉES
Diana Resting



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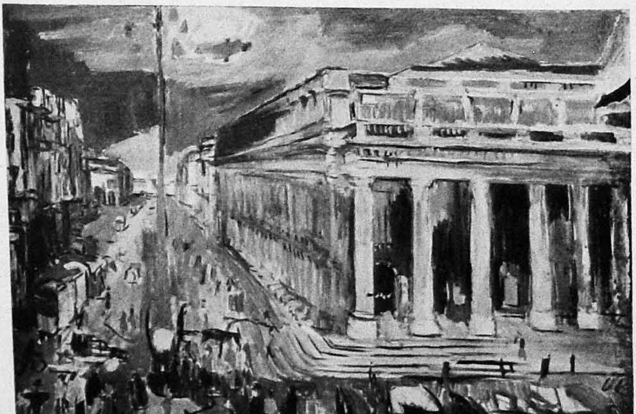
A. FAISTAUER: The Seven Beasts

FRANZ MARC: "Red Deer"



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O. KOKOSCHKA: The Bordeaux Bourse

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was an artistic conviction which the invasion of Germany by French impressionism in the late 'eighties could do nothing to weaken, and he sustained his tradition with unfailing vigour; but impressionism was coming to Germany both from within and without, and Max Liebermann (*b.* 1847), both in landscape and portraiture, was among the first to feel the need for a broader and swifter vision and for the means to translate it into pigment.

In his work there is little of the logical and analytical method of the French impressionists, though he was in Paris when Pissarro and Monet were evolving their principles of divisionism. He works rather by diffusion of forms than by decomposition of light, and his *Garden at Wannsee* (Bremen) suggests a leaning towards the rule-of-thumb impressionism of Constable rather than towards the more scientific attitude of the Frenchmen. His *Cabbage-Field* (Dresden) attains a greater breadth and realization of atmosphere, but it is in his interiors, such as the *Old Woman at a Window* (Essen) and the *Studio* in a private collection, that his rendering of light is seen to the most striking advantage. Although he may perhaps be regarded as the first avowed impressionist in Germany, the way had already been prepared, and well prepared, by Adolph von Menzel (1815–1891), whose *Exposition Universelle, Paris*, 1867, shows how closely he had looked at the work of the first impressionists in Paris. One is reminded, in spite of a thousand dissimilarities, of Renoir, for though in his earlier landscapes there is no trace of impressionism, in his portrayal of moving crowds and broken light he has the same spontaneous intimacy of touch, and the same remarkable power of giving coherence and balance to apparently unstudied composition; and in a picture of movement in half light, like the *Bon Soir, Messieurs*, at Hamburg, he gives, rather surprisingly, a hint of the extent to which Rembrandt had anticipated the practice, if not the theories, of the impressionist movement.

Germany was, in fact, already feeling towards the record of light and transient effects of vision, while Manet, Pissarro and Monet were establishing its principles, and so was able,

after the first contacts with Paris, to go forward upon independent lines: but she was slow in getting into her stride, for despite von Menzel and Liebermann, it was not until after 1890 that impressionism took hold upon the German critics, and only at the very end of the century, in 1899, did it really grip the popular imagination; and then only through the exhibition in Berlin of the work of foreigners, and "post-impressionists" at that, Cézanne, Gauguin and van Gogh. In the same year, the Berlin Secession forced upon the public notice the existence of a native impressionism, developing rapidly towards the highly individualized expression of the succeeding years. All the most brilliant, the most convincing, and the most essentially German work of Lovis Corinth (1858–1925) was produced in the 20th century. Though, while a pupil of Bouguereau in Paris in the early 'eighties, he must have been acquainted with, and attracted by the then fully developed principles of the luminists, there is no trace of French method in his work, and it was not until nearly thirty years later that he arrived at the splendid mastery of broken colour and of the suggestion of plastic form and spatial design which appears so forcefully in his *Susanna and the Elders* of 1923. But whether in still-life, or landscape, or in the innumerable paintings of his beloved Walchensee, or in the painting of the nude, he had always before him as his goal the triple object of realizing to the full the values of colour, space, and design, and of bringing them into a harmonious unity as the means of achieving a convincing realism of final effect. His colour is uncompromising, but superb in spite of, or perhaps because of, its violent simplicity, and it would be hard to find a picture of his that was not inspired by a real love of the subject, as a thing felt as well as seen. Lovis Corinth was tremendously sincere in his devotion both to the means and to the end, and he treats his pigment with the respect due from a good master to a willing servant.

It is difficult to place beside him, as expressive in a like degree of the German enjoyment of reality combined with intense individuality of expression, any of his contemporaries

of similar outlook. Ulrich Hübner (*b.* 1872) is perhaps nearest, with his free yet faithful rendering of broken light in foliage, as in his *Canal at Potsdam*, and the movement and activity of streets and harbours in Lübeck, Hamburg and London; but compared with Corinth his colour is subdued and his touch diffused. He has not the militant vigour, nor the touch of asperity, of the bigger man.

In the matter of still-life painting Carl Schuch (1846–1903) and Curt Herrmann (*b.* 1854) had shown the way from the polished formalities of Feuerbach and the timid essays of Trübner and Theodor Hagen (1842–1919); and the bold gaiety and naturalistic statement of Anna Gasteiger (*b.* 1873), set a standard in the opening years of the century for the German flower-painters of to-day, of clean colour and fine pattern and decided touch; indeed, we may fairly say that the keynote of German painting, of whatever subject or school or " ism " in the last thirty years, has been this same masterful air in colour and in brushwork. Carl Hofer (*b.* 1878) is a pupil of Hans Thoma, but has studied also in Rome and Paris and has seen Oriental colour in India; and he finds expression in work like his *Landscape, Tessin*, which suggests a blend of Cézanne (in emphasis upon angularity of form), Gauguin (in fullness and flatness of colour), and a wholly German *naïveté* in enjoyment of landscape for its own sake. Hermann Max Pechstein (*b.* 1881) and Emil Nolde (*b.* 1867) fell under the spell of Gauguin, and sought inspiration in the tropics, which accentuated the vigour of colour of the one, and the harsh characterization and brutal but impressive design of the other. Pechstein sometimes approaches the stridency of van Gogh, but never his burning enthusiasm; but he is a very positive painter, who often hits a happy stroke of design, as in his characteristic *Corn-stooks*, in which the bent heads of the sheaves and the flat rectangular faces of the houses in the background are very harmoniously balanced against one another.

It was about 1911 that the repercussions of cubism began to make themselves felt in Berlin, and expressionist painting found eager devotees throughout Germany. It

was a peculiar episode, for it did not produce a single German cubist in the theoretic sense. It merely served, in the first place, as an outlet for that Gothic love of fantasy that is ineradicable from the German character, and for an indulgence in a riot of pure colour, in which was revealed a mastery, unmatched in any other race, of the handling of masses of primary colour in violent opposition. This aspect of German art, which is extremely puzzling to the foreigner at first sight, had scarcely been allowed to show itself since the Middle Ages, and not only did it make up for lost time, but it consolidated the position it had gained, and is now a well-established and typical factor in German art. Macke's *Girls under the Trees* is no more than a plain statement of the subject reduced to very simple masses of pure colour; even the wild and seemingly incoherent mixture of cubism and futurism of the *Tempel der Ewigkeit* of the painter who signs himself Bô-yin-ra is really no more than an excuse for a very beautiful colour-fantasy; and it comes far too near to representation of its "emotive source" to be classed as purely expressionist painting. The German cannot get away altogether from the subject, and lose himself in speculative theory. Egotistical he may be, but he likes others to share his egotism intelligently as well as emotionally. To what heights of vivid beauty this German handling of the raw material of cubism, and of the principles of futurism, can rise, we may discover in the *Blue Horses* of the brilliant young Bavarian painter Franz Marc, who was born in 1880, and fell at Verdun in 1916. Here is movement, swift yet stately, in the rhythmic curve of the arched necks, almost lost in the sequence of harmonic repetition of their outline; here is colour, veering between deepest blue and clear sea-green, as though it shifted with the breaking of a wave; and here is form, adapted, not distorted, to obey the unity of the whole design; this picture is remembered as the very embodiment of the spirit of a rising wave.

And in his paintings of horses, simply as horses and no more, Marc, whatever colour he chose to paint them, blue or scarlet, white or black or brown, could catch the chancy waywardness of horses running wild, as no one ever caught

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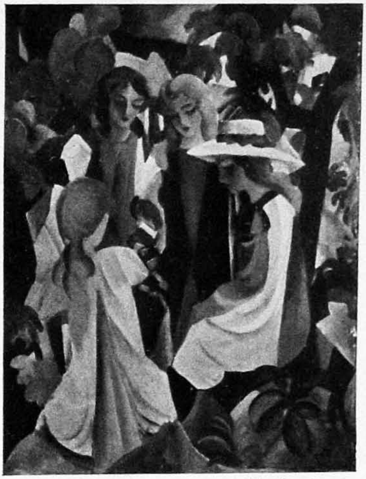
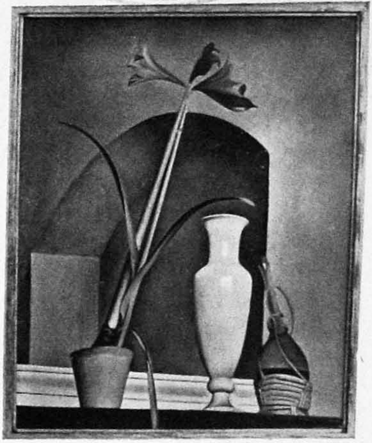


Ph. Bruckmann

A. MACKE
Girls in a Wood



Ph. Bruckmann

A. KANOLDT
Still Life

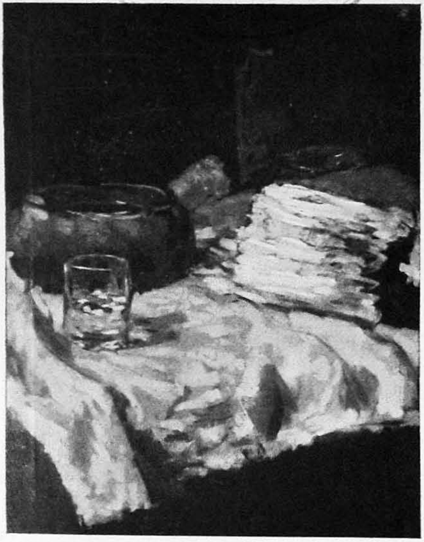
Ph. Bruckmann

MAX PECHSTEIN
The Violincellist

Ph. Bruckmann

E. NOLDE
Flower-study

DHAN... LIAR

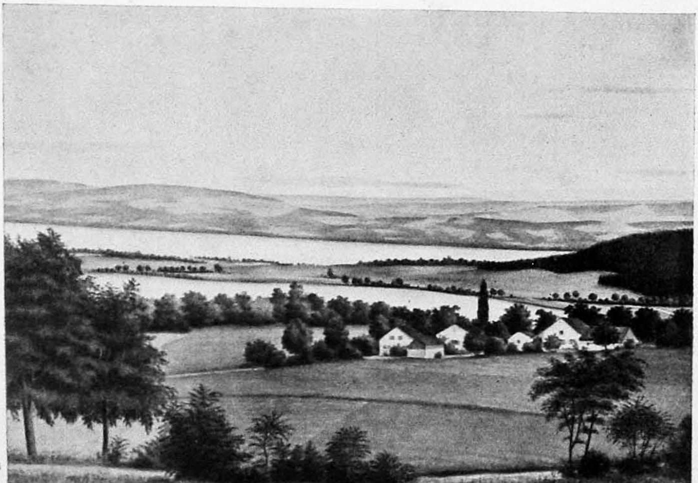


Ph. Bruckmann

CARL SCHUCH
Still Life

Ph. Bruckmann

OTTO DIX
Portrait of a Man



Ph. Bruckmann

G. SCHRIMPF
Landscape

it before, except perhaps some of the very greatest Japanese. His decorative sense is unerring, but it never smothers his interest in the creatures that he uses as the material of his design. Marc's work has the intense happiness of complete sincerity, the inevitable rightness that comes of superb draftsmanship without preciosity or self-conscious skill.

The exuberant strength of the German colourist is tempered in the Austrian by a lighter gaiety, a less full-blooded joy of life. The art of Anton Faistauer and of Kokoschka is altogether more subtle than that of Marc or Hübner or Heckel (*b.* 1883), that interesting and versatile member of the "Bridge" group at Dresden whose work has something of the solid solemnity of Cézanne, despite a complete absence of straight lines and sharply separated planes. Perhaps the essential difference is that while the German is passionately in earnest in his desire to convey to others the utter rightness of his sense of beauty, the Austrian has just that saving grace of humorous tolerance that will not allow him to take himself so seriously as to hamper his own enjoyment of life. He is none the less sincere; but he would sooner be gay on six days of the week than happy on Sundays only, and, while he has a great respect for the sublime, he has also a sneaking affection for the ridiculous.

This gaiety is at once apparent in the art of the Austrians Anton Faistauer (*b.* 1888) and Oskar Kokoschka (*b.* 1886), both of whom studied in Vienna. Clean freshness of colour and directness of approach to the subject, together with a fine sense of firmly-knit structural design, give to the work of Faistauer an air of simplicity which is more apparent than real. There can be no doubt that he was, in Paris, an attentive student of the work of Cézanne, and in his *Gardone di Sopra* there is at the first glance a strong suggestion of the Provençal master; but this disappears as soon as it is realized that the geometrical substructure of the design is used with an opportunist empiricism very far removed from the laboured thought which Cézanne would have given to the same task; and in his flower-subjects there is no trace of the static massiveness of a still-life by Cézanne, but simply a brilliantly happy grouping of bold colour and a

reckless diffusion of form that seems to catch the transient character of the subject with a kind of happy-go-lucky lightness; and although in such a figure-subject as his *Portrait of the Singer Richard Mayr in "Rosenkavalier,"* the commanding solidity of the figure and the well-defined depth of surrounding space are the first things to catch the eye, it is ultimately the joyous liveliness of movement and the telling rendering of character which remain in the memory. One might almost say that the amusement that the artist gets out of his work means more to him than the enjoyment that he puts into it—that his skill is a pleasure to him rather than a preoccupation.

Oskar Kokoschka (*b.* 1886) is a wayward creature in his art, ranging from the delicious study of fretful boredom in his *Portrait of the Poet Ehrenstein*, in which every line seems to shift uneasily and restlessly in sympathy with the mental state that it portrays, to the flickering glitter of his *Richmond Terrace* or the gaudy liveliness and movement of his *Tower Bridge*, which presents to English eyes a new and exciting impression of their drab London river. In all his work there is an air of cheerful adventure and surprise.

The subtleties of these two artists are utterly beyond the scope of the great majority of German painters: but the *Madonna and Child*, and the *Madonna with the Rose* (1927) of H. Windelschmidt, with their extraordinary blend of Byzantine hieratic simplicity, of vivid and untempered colour that is nevertheless kept perfectly within bounds by masterly design, and of angular forms which seem to make game at once of cubist and futurist theories by their surprisingly naturalistic result, leave a haunting impression of sweetness and tender reverence that is wholly bewildering, in view of the means by which it is achieved. These pictures could be hung beside either a Fra Angelico or a Severini without incongruity.

This is but a single aspect of the return to realism which is the most recent development of modern German art. We have already seen, in the work of Hofer, Faistauer, Nolde, Pechstein and Marc that the influence of French post-impressionism was superficial, and resulted rather in

the adaptation of its practice than in the adoption of its various theories; and in that of Windelschmidt and "Bô-yin-ra" it is made plain that the same is true of the German attitude towards cubism and futurism. Although Germany indulged, from 1920 onwards for about five years, in cubistic essays of a kind, these cannot be regarded with any great seriousness, for side by side with them a genuine and national movement of new realism—the "Neue Sachlichkeit"—was growing in strength and coherence, and it is this movement, not the imported and imitative excursions into "abstract form," which really represents the German outlook.

An intermediate and preparatory stage was that of a blending of impressionist realism with strong pattern, as in the exaggerated but convincing mountain scenery of Wolf Roericht; and in Martin Paatz we have a painter who, like Dunoyer de Segonzac in France, arrived at a highly individualized naturalism braced by strong unity of design, and great freedom of execution. His river scenes and landscapes are full of light-laden atmosphere, simple in statement of form and subtle in colour. Lovis Corinth, in the last ten years of his life especially, was a supreme exponent of this school, and Ulrich Hübner is to be reckoned as one of its outstanding figures; but the disturbing influence of the theories of abstract form and colour inevitably impressed itself upon the minds of younger men; and, since their natural attitude towards art is at bottom sturdily objective, making it impossible to swallow whole the subjective doctrines of Paris, they evolved a kind of compromise, which has resulted in an art in which the hands are the hands of Cézanne, but the voice is the voice of Friedrich. In the work of such a painter as J. H. Bissier, the result is a naïve simplification of natural forms of trees and landscape which recalls Henri Rousseau, a rhythm in the design that goes back to the classic landscape of Poussin, and a solidity in the masses that is reminiscent of the aims of Cézanne. Alexander Kanoldt, whether in landscape or still-life, achieves plastic solidity and spatial depth without any sacrifice of realism. In the landscapes of Georg Scholz we find almost

photographic accumulation of detail made impressive by a singular felicity in the discovery of harmonious design in natural scenery; like a very different Englishman in a very different tradition, John Crome, he can "see pictures" ready-made; and in the work of Georg Schrimpf (*b.* 1889), who, like Bissier, had gone through the mill of cubistic experiment, the wheel comes full circle, so far as the underlying spirit of his art is concerned, to the quiet sentiment and reposeful happiness of Friedrich a full century ago. True, there is a greater strength of design, and a more vigorous massing of tones, and in his delightful landscape *Staffelsee*, there is a grasp of the rendering of spatial depth quite beyond the powers of the earlier painter with his formal gradation of tones and carefully diffused light; but the difference in them is one of means rather than of aim.

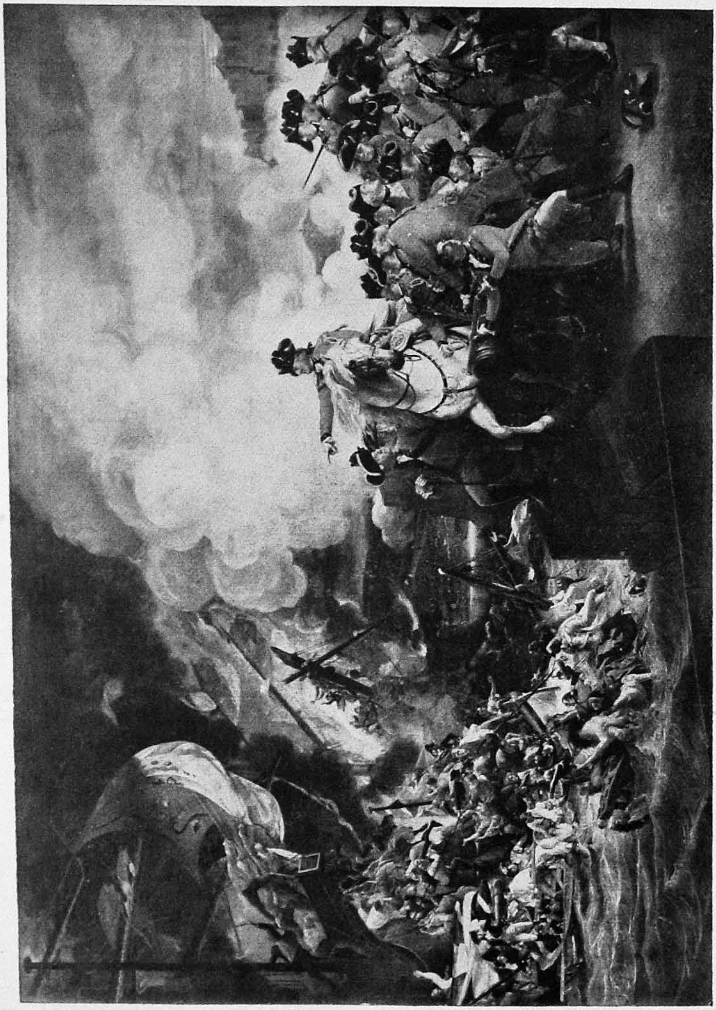
In the same way the objectivism of Otto Schön's (*b.* 1893) flower-pictures is uncompromising, and he pays homage to no theories; a crispness of drawing, and a firm rendering of the solidity of forms, are conquests from, not concessions to cubism; and in the portraiture of Otto Dix, German art seems to be feeling its way back to its mediæval blend of literal representation, heraldic simplification, and sentimental curiosity—a kind of mixture of Holbein, Cranach and—Otto Hupp! It is all to the good. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same thing has happened in England, with Nevinson and Flight and Duncan Grant, John Nash and Henry Lamb. The same thing is happening, more slowly, in France, with Derain and Dunoyer de Segonzac; and that the experiments and theories of the second decade of this century were needed, and that, regarded as laboratory work, they have done good, is shown by the impetus that they have given to painting even in the Balkan States, where the art has lain dormant under the spell of Byzantine tradition for centuries, no less than in the West, where the facile futilities of vain repetition had so long dominated the academic schools.

D... LIAR

Ph. Bruckmann

K. W. HÜBNER
The Unexpected Return

K. FRIEDRICH
Landscape



J. S. COPLEY
The Siege of Gibraltar

CHAPTER IV

THE AMERICAN SCHOOL

AN American wrote not long ago: "Between 450,000 and 500,000 Americans go to Europe every year to see the art of the Old World; it is doubtful if fifty of them could name one hundred of the seven thousand *living* American artists listed in *Who's Who in American Art.*"

It must be, then, a colossal impertinence on the part of an English writer to attempt even the barest outline sketch of the development and tendencies of American painting; and yet probably his very remoteness from the scene is something of an advantage. To him, the distances which separate the great centres of population and of artistic activity in the American continent are only little spaces on the map. They do not exist for him practically. They are geographical fictions. In America and to Americans they are tedious journeys, real distances, vital and essential changes of surroundings, atmosphere, even history. Thus while an American will, far more readily than a European critic, recognize the differences which separate the art, for example, of the East from that of the Middle West, the far West, and the South West, the looker-on at a distance will see, almost at a glance, the common element which unites them all, and makes them all American art. So, and so only, can the presumption of this chapter be condoned.

If, however, the review of American painting is to be a fair one, and of any critical value whatever, it must be held together by some semblance of historical completeness and continuity; and for that reason it must trespass backwards a little beyond the limit of the past hundred years, for there was a time when future American painters were being born subjects of King George III; and of these, not a few found themselves learning and practising their art in the old country from which their forbears had come.

Indeed, the earliest painters in America were, as might be expected, importations from Great Britain. Naturally also, they were not painters of the first rank, for in the first half of the 18th century there was no inducement to men of

established reputation in the arts to seek fortune in a new world, where the harder aspects of life left comparatively little room for aesthetic development. That such a wretchedly equipped painter as the Scotsman Chambers, whose work in England was the painting of inscriptions on family portraits at a penny a letter, and the copying and cleaning of pictures, should have been able to support himself as an artist in New York from 1725 to 1734, seems to show that competition at that period was not fierce; but there is, at any rate, one notable exception to this rule in John Smibert (1684–1751), who first came to America in 1728 with George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, as a participant in a colonizing scheme in the Bermudas. The scheme came to nothing, and the Bishop returned to Ireland, but Smibert settled in Boston for the rest of his life, in spite of the persuasive eloquence of Berkeley, who wrote to him in 1735, pointing out the advantages of his deserting Boston for Cork, " four times as populous as Boston and a hundred times as rich."

Before he left England Smibert, who was born in Edinburgh, had already achieved a respectable position in London, but it is significant that Vertue classes him, with the note " abroad, in Boston, New England," as one of twelve second-rate painters who had studied under Kneller. In the same list appear the names of Gibson, Vanderbank, Huyssing, Highmore and Dandridge and, very surprisingly to us, Hogarth: but we have to remember that in 1732, when Vertue made this note, Hogarth was yet at the beginning of his career as a painter, and moreover that he was never really appreciated by contempoiary critics. Very likely Smibert, who could never have hoped to compete with his famous seniors, Richardson, Dahl, and others of their rank, might not in ordinary circumstances have risked his fortunes across the Atlantic; but finding himself, almost by chance, a Triton among minnows in Boston, he was swayed by the business instinct of his race, and stayed there to make a good living, not only as a painter, but also as a print-seller and artists' colourman, and probably, like most painters of his day, as a teacher as well.

His work is subdued in colour, with a kind of grim precision of execution which is forcible rather than hard. His portrait of his patron and friend Bishop Berkeley, which hangs in the National Portrait Gallery, London, shows him to have been a direct and vigorous portraitist, endowed with little either of imagination or charm, but master of a sound if unadventurous technique. Towards the end of his life his sight began to fail, as he mentions in a letter to his London agent in 1749, adding that he is "still heartwhole and hath been diverting myself with something in the Landskip way, which you know I always liked." He must have been almost if not quite the earliest landscape painter in America, though, as he regarded this branch of his art as a "diversion," it is unlikely that he transmitted it to any pupil.

Indeed, the connections of Smibert with the later development of painting in America are shadowy, though the earliest sources of instruction open to Trumbull, who was to become one of the foremost portrait painters in America, were the copies of French and Italian old masters left by the Scottish painter in his studio, and still lying there when the young Trumbull rented it a quarter of a century later. It is almost too much to suppose that the fact that Smibert's nephew, Dr. Thomas Moffatt of Rhode Island, was the employer of Gilbert Stuart's father implies any connection between the art of Smibert and of Stuart, and there is certainly no trace of it in Stuart's work; but as another nephew, John Moffatt, was still carrying on, as late as 1769, the colourman's business inherited from his uncle, there can be little doubt that Stuart knew the work of Smibert, whose sound drawing and direct honesty of presentation of his subject could not fail to be of value to any budding painter. It is known, too, that Charles Wilson Peale used to buy his colours from Moffatt, and the same contact with Smibert's work is also suggested in his case; but all three of these painters, by completing their education in the studio of their compatriot Benjamin West, may be regarded as having deserted the tradition of Kneller, which, in England, had come to an end in the conflict between Hogarth on the one

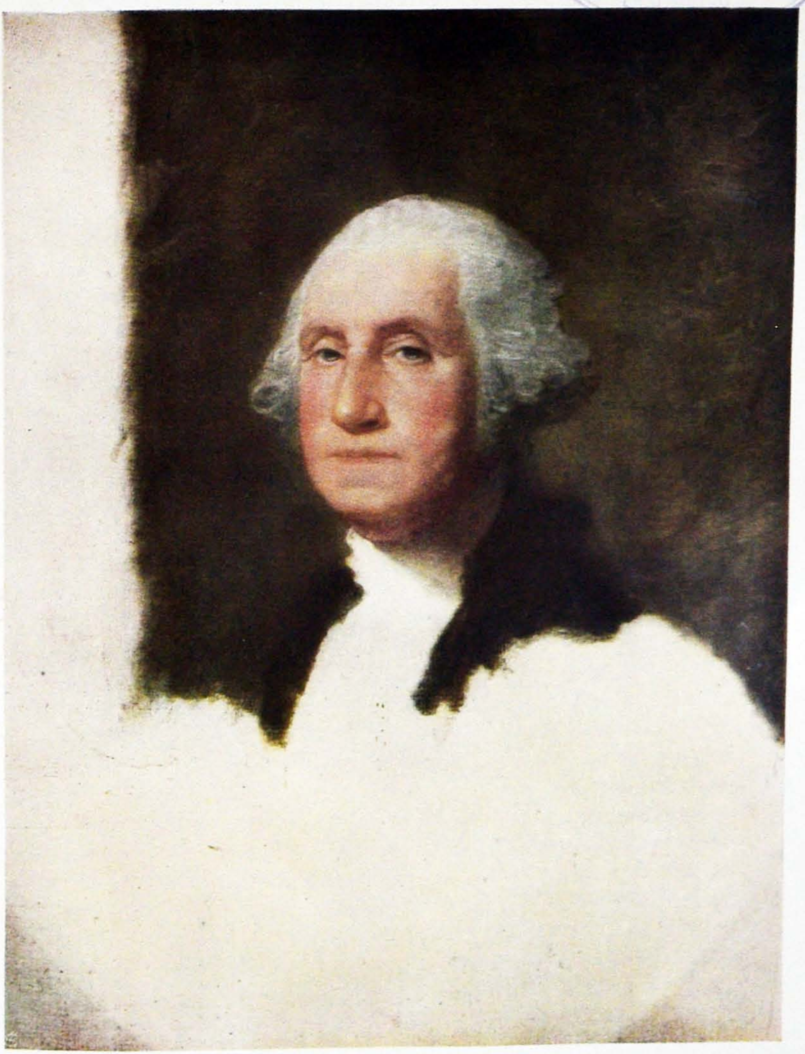
hand and the Italianate academic school on the other, soon after the departure of Smibert from England.

A more direct contact with Smibert is that of the Bostonian, John Singleton Copley (1737–1815). It is on the face of it unlikely that he received any actual tuition from Smibert, for he was only a lad of fourteen when the Scottish painter died; but his portrait of Mrs. Gill, painted in 1759, when he was still only twenty-two, is such a marvellously vigorous and sympathetic piece of work, as to place beyond doubt the very early development of its painter. The only sign of immaturity in it is, in fact, a weakness in the foreshortening of the right arm; and against this we have to place a restraint and power in the management of a scheme of blacks and greys and subdued blues and browns, and a quiet confidence in the handling of paint, which afford evidence not only of considerable experience, but of an experience derived directly from the study of the work of some painter of whose style and method these were the outstanding characteristics. In Boston, at this time, that painter could be no other than Smibert, and, in fact, in its technical aspects, this early work by Copley strongly recalls his method of handling.

The young Copley, however, brought to his work qualities of his own, in which Smibert had been conspicuously lacking—namely, a sensitive human sympathy with the subjects of his brush, which gives to his portrayal of them a wonderful and most engaging vitality; a very subtle and delicate colour-sense, which enabled him to give far greater interest to his limited range of colours than Smibert had ever done; and an under-note of drama, which scarcely found scope till after he had left America, but is nevertheless plainly to be observed, for example, in his portrait of Samuel Adams (Boston Museum), for all its severe simplicity of pose and quietude of colour. This picture, painted in 1772, is one of a fine series of portraits by Copley in the Boston Museum, in which it is possible to observe the changes wrought in Copley's outlook by his departure from America for Italy and England in 1773.

Copley was a year older than Benjamin West (1738–1820)

DHA... ...LIAR



G. STUART

George Washington

and in many ways his superior as a painter: but West had left America twelve years before Copley, and in those twelve years had established a reputation in London which placed him in a position in the English art world far above his deserts as a painter; and when Copley arrived in London he found West high in Royal favour and the darling of the critics. Yet his own appearance upon the scene in London was sufficiently romantic, for seven years before his arrival there he was already known, and in 1766 his picture, *A boy with a flying squirrel*, was accepted for exhibition by the Incorporated Society of Artists. In the autumn of the previous year he had entrusted it to a sea-captain named Bruce, with the object of getting it shown in London; Bruce was able to show it to Lord Cardross, who, in his turn, showed it to Sir Joshua Reynolds. Bruce wrote to Copley, in a letter still extant, saying that Reynolds at once pronounced "that it exceeded any portrait that Mr. West ever drew," and that, considering the disadvantages Copley had laboured under, it was a very wonderful performance. He further sent through Bruce urgent advice to Copley to come to Europe, saying that "with the advantages of the example and instruction which you could have in Europe you would be a valuable acquisition to the art and one of the first painters in the world, provided you could receive these aids before it was too late in life and before your manner and taste were corrupted or fixed by working in your own little way in Boston."

Copley himself had felt the limitations imposed upon his development by his remoteness from Europe. Although he was making a good living in Boston as a portrait-painter, he wrote that he was "peculiarly unlucky in living in a place into which there has not been one portrait brought within my memory that is worthy to be called a picture," and complained that "was it not for preserving the resemblance of particular persons, painting would not be known in the place." Lord Lyndhurst, Copley's son, was most probably quoting his father when he said that the painter "never saw a decent picture till he was nearly thirty years of age"—which was a little unfair to Smibert.

Not only Reynolds, but West as well, encouraged Copley to come to England, and West seconded Hayman's proposal of his name for election as a Fellow of the Incorporated Society, a great honour to have been conferred upon a painter personally unknown to every member of the Society. He was elected in September 1766, but in his dignified letter of acknowledgment explains that "the tie of Filial Duty pleads my excuse" for not coming to England to take up the honour; and it was not until 1773 that he was able to do so.

In view of what has already been said about his Colonial portraits, Reynolds' criticism of his *Portrait of a Young Lady*, hung in the Society's exhibition in 1767, is interesting. Apparently the lady was very plain, but apart from this (and from what we have observed as Copley's uncompromising directness of portrayal) Reynolds (reported by Bruce) "dislikes your shades, he says they want life and transparency. He says your drawing is wonderfully correct, but that a something is wanting in your colouring"—a something, it seems, that he could not explain in words, but which he was sure he could easily demonstrate. Plainly, Reynolds was keen to tempt the young painter across the seas, and equally plainly, he was right, for a very short time in Europe gave Copley the bolder control of colour that he had lacked in America. Like West before him, he came to England via Italy, travelling with Mr. and Mrs. Izard of Boston. It was during his stay in Rome that he painted the "conversation piece" of this couple, which now hangs at Boston, and already there may be seen in the female figure in this group a greater grace of line and freedom of pose, to say nothing of a markedly greater command of drawing. The male figure is still a little reminiscent of the stiffness of the Bostonian period, but taken as a whole the picture is a remarkable achievement for one who had so recently become acquainted at first-hand with Italian models.

More successful, because it lacks the self-conscious response to classical environment of the *Mr. and Mrs. Izard*, is another conversation piece, lent by Mr. Walter Winslow to the Tate Gallery, London. This is the group of Isaac

Winslow and Jemima Winslow, a wonderfully delicate and subdued scheme of blacks, browns and greys against a dull red ground. Francis Cotes himself had never surpassed, and rarely equalled, the sensitive refinement of this picture. The by no means lovely face of the lady is that of a woman whom one wishes one had known, so alive is it with attractive personality. The texture of the paint is exquisite, the drawing masterly. There is a faint trace of the old rigidity in the attitude and drawing of the man, but he, too, is alive and knowable, and though the strongest note of colour in the whole picture is the dull red-brown of a polished mahogany table, the impression left upon the memory is that of a delicate interplay of colours, not in the least that of a tinted monochrome. In spite of its quietude and of its fine draftsmanship the beauty of this picture is almost wholly lost by reproduction in black and white. Copley's immediate and sensitive reaction to new influences demonstrates the accuracy of Reynolds' prophecy of his possibilities, which he ultimately fulfilled to admiration in his immense canvas of the *Repulse of the Floating Batteries at Gibraltar*, commissioned by the Corporation of London. A smaller replica is in the Tate Gallery. This is a really remarkable historical composition, commanding alike in colour, characterization and design. In the matter of historic drama, his *Death of Chatham* is scarcely less successful, though it was severely criticized at the time on the score of literal inaccuracy, and does not strike the same high level of compositional harmony.

Finer than either of these, and in fact one of the finest historical pictures of the 18th century, is the *Death of Major Pierson* (Tate Gallery). Intensely dramatic, yet without a trace of theatricality, balanced in design to the point of decorativeness, without the least hint of artificial order or restraint, extraordinarily skilful in the handling of the uncompromising scarlet of uniforms, this great picture is inspired by a passionate sincerity unapproached in historical painting in Copley's generation, save perhaps by West's *Death of Wolfe*, that daring innovation of the painter's yet unspoiled youth, which had paved the way for Copley's

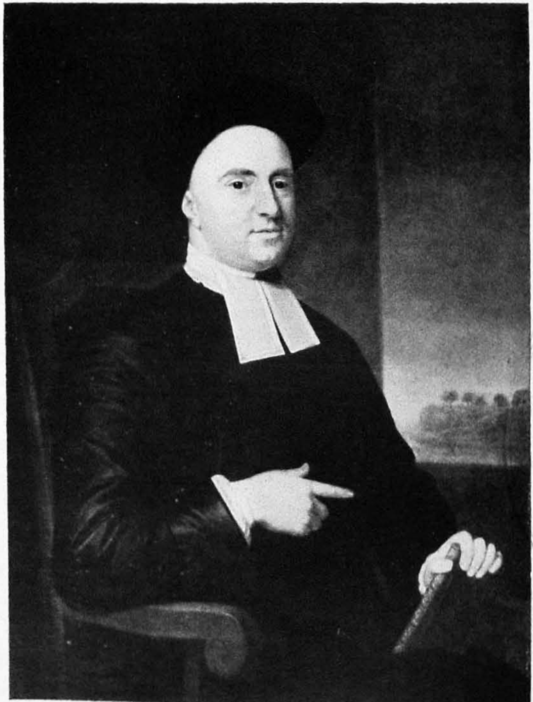
great achievement in the realm of dramatic realism. Copley, despite his immediate success in London, largely due to the warm welcome accorded to him by West, managed to fall foul of his eminent compatriot, and ultimately outlived both his powers and his reputation. It is only now that he is beginning to be recognized as a painter who probably made the best of that rather stagey aspect of art in his time, the painting of historical subjects. When we consider that it was but a few years since West had flouted tradition by painting the *Death of Wolfe*, not in pseudo-classical costume, but with all the figures " in their habit as they lived," it is really astounding that Copley should so soon have raised the battle picture to the height of dramatic actuality achieved in the *Death of Major Pierson*. The two pictures may fairly be used in comparison as a means of estimating the relative merits of the two men, for West's work is of his earliest years in England, when he was still full of the earnest sincerity of youth, and rather protesting against than succumbing to the extravagant adulation that dubbed him a rival of Raphael; while Copley, to whom opportunity came later in life, was able to retain his deeply founded sincerity of outlook, and to use, rather than be enslaved by, the wider knowledge gained by the study of classical models.

It may be asked, what was this magic of Europe, for which Copley longed, and which so quickly turned such men as West, Bembridge and Stuart from struggling beginners into accomplished painters, and attracted such convinced Americans as Trumbull and Morse to England, the former even in times of war between England and America? The answer lies in the relentless tide that some call progress, and some, fashion. All the models that existed in America were rooted in a tradition that was already dead in England—the Anglo-Dutch tradition of Lely and Kneller, leavened by a spice of Scottish austerity—a dour, and a desperately old-fashioned, source of inspiration. The Italian lesson of free and sweeping draftsmanship, which had emancipated Reynolds from the bonds of Hudson's tutelage, could never have reached America, for those who had learnt it could prosper—as West did—beyond all deserving in England.

By courtesy Ehrich Gallery, New York

J. S. COPLEY

Henry Addington, 1st Viscount Sidmouth, P.C.



SMIBERT

G. Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne

DHANAKOTI MUDALIAR

By courtesy Ehrich Gallery, New York

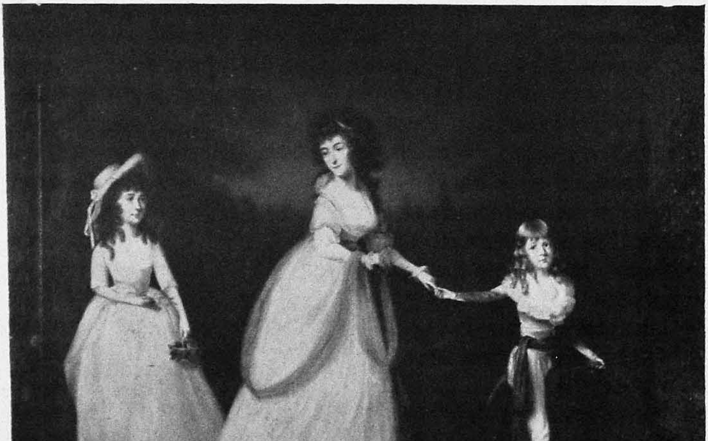
C. W. PEALE

Portrait of a Lady

By courtesy Ehrich Gallery, New York

JOHN VANDERLYN

Mr. Cole



By courtesy Ferargil Galleries, New York

BENJAMIN WEST

Mrs. Murdoch and Children

And since the mountain would not come to Mahomet, Mahomet had to come to the mountain. Moreover, in a new country, not only the painters, but their patrons were behind the times. Like England in the 16th and 17th centuries, America, in the 18th, wanted a likeness and nothing more. To be sure, England wanted little else for two-thirds of the 18th century, but at least her public, led by her critics, had leisure, and a sufficient smattering of cosmopolitan taste to make a good pretence of wanting more, which gave their artists an outlet for their ambitions in the direction of allegory, "histories" and even landscape, and taxed both their invention and their draftsmanship more than the dreary round of "cursed face-painting," as Gainsborough called it.

Neither West nor Copley ever returned to America, but this does not mean that they exercised no influence upon American art. It was their success in London which brought to England many more Americans, who might otherwise have sought to perform the wellnigh impossible task of transplanting Italian methods direct to America

Probably Bembridge, who was the companion of West in Italy between 1760 and 1763, was the first American to return from an Italian training to his native country, where he practised in Charleston as a portrait-painter with considerable success: his portrait of Paoli, the Corsican patriot, created something of a sensation at the Exhibition of the Free Society in London in 1769, and in 1770 he exhibited two portraits at the Academy, one of them that of Benjamin Franklin. He was already in Charleston in 1773. He does not seem, however, to have produced any effect on American painting. He probably found it more profitable to keep his knowledge, acquired in Italy, to himself, or else public opinion was not yet ripe for the more pictorial portrait, and preferred to stick to its severe and simple likeness-makers.

Benjamin West, who was in his own day so much more important a figure in the world of art than he is to-day, was born in Chester County, about fourteen miles from Philadelphia, in 1738. He was not, as is generally stated, a

Quaker, though his father, who had emigrated from England, and is variously described as a publican, a cooper and a hosier by trade, frequented the meetings of the Society of Friends. His brother, who never left America, joined the Friends, but neither West senior nor Benjamin ever did so. On his own testimony his first effort in drawing was made at the age of eight, and many years afterwards this drawing was sent to him in England by his brother, and was treasured by him all the rest of his life. By the time he was twenty his reputation in Philadelphia as a portrait-painter was so far established as to move the *American Magazine*, published in Philadelphia, to laudatory verse, and to the prophecy, duly fulfilled, that " when he shall have obtained more experience, and proper opportunities of viewing the productions of able masters, he will become truly eminent in his profession," and that his name was known outside his native place is shown by his statement that a self-portrait painted at this time was done by him as a gift to a certain Miss Steele, with whom he was " very much in love," and given to her " previous to my going to New York, whither I was sent for, to paint some portraits."

A couple of years later, in 1760, West took the hint given by the *American Magazine*, and went to Italy to view the productions of able masters. Till then, his only instruction had been given him by an obscure painter named Williams, who lent him a manuscript book on the lives of famous painters, and taught him the simplest elements of painting. Mr. Whitley tells, in his *Artists and their Friends in England 1700–1799*, the romantic history of Williams, whose adventures among savages, written under the name of Llewellyn Owen, were published by Murray in 1815; and West, in 1805, testified that the lives of the painters, lent to him by Williams, " lighted up a fire in my breast that has never been extinguished."

His three years in Italy were spent in sheer hard work, and it is worth notice that while in Florence he yet found time to make many English friends who were useful to him afterwards. Indeed, the plain truth is that at least one-half of West's unbroken success was the outcome of his capacity

for making friends. His most valuable asset was personal charm. He was not a well-educated man, and to the end of his life he never either spoke or wrote his own language correctly; but he had good looks, grace both of form and manner, innate courtliness, a ready sympathy and consideration for those below him on the ladder, respect without sycophancy for those above him. His was a triumph of character more than of ability; and when the need arose to fight, as it did once or twice in his relations with the Academy, he could fight both vigorously and with dignity.

This aspect of West may seem beside the point in a history of painting, but if it be remembered that he never lost touch with, nor affection for, his native land, its bearing on the development of American painting becomes at once apparent. Every American who came to London gravitated naturally to West's studio, and most of them became, for a time at least, his pupils. As a member of the Institution, and director of St. Martin's Lane Academy, then as a founder member of the Royal Academy, and later as its President, he could and did open the way to them to all the best instruction that England could offer; as historical painter to King George III, and more than this, one of the King's nearest friends, he had influence to smooth their path in difficult places. In these respects he was, if not the father, at any rate the fairy godmother, of American art; and this relationship was founded upon the English friendships he had made in Florence; for when he came to England he had every intention of going home, but found success so quickly and so easily in England that he never completed the journey.

Instead, he set to work at the St. Martin's Lane Academy, and before the year (1763) was out had begun his first English commission, a full-length portrait of General Monckton, who had fought with Wolfe at Quebec four years before, and who figures conspicuously in West's *Death of General Wolfe*.

At the request of Reynolds and Richard Wilson, he sent this portrait to the Spring Gardens exhibition in 1764, together with two subject pictures painted in Italy, *Angelica and Medoro* and *Cymon and Iphigenia*. Perhaps it is not

surprising that in these latter works West had gone too far in his Italianizing zeal, for Italy must have been an overpowering revelation to him in the way of flourish and "style," after the austere and angular literalism by which he had been surrounded at home: but at any rate they were well in the fashion in England, and earned him in the *Public Advertiser* the description of "a celebrated painter, known in Italy by the name of the American Raphael."

He soon made up his mind to follow up his success, for early in 1764 he sent for his betrothed, Miss Elizabeth Shewell, who arrived in England that summer with her father and Matthew Pratt, a Philadelphia painter related to the Shewells. The marriage took place very shortly after her arrival, and West settled in London, in (as Pratt naïvely records) "a very elegant house, completely fitted up to accommodate a very large family." Plainly, he felt fairly sure of himself, even at this early stage in his career.

He was justified in his confidence, for surely no man ever had a career of such unbroken success on such slight grounds. His work is hard to find in the country of his adoption to-day, and in America it is preserved and esteemed more out of respect for the memory of the man than on account of its artistic merit. His colour is poor, his characterization, in his portraits, feeble. Even the self-portrait in the T. B. Clarke Collection, lately in the Pennsylvania Museum, gives us but a vague idea of the man, and, placed beside Gilbert Stuart's two beautiful renderings of the same subject in the National Portrait Gallery and the Tate Gallery, London, would stand condemned as a stiff and feeble piece of work. Among his much admired allegories and historical pieces, his earliest effort, the *Death of Wolfe*, stands alone as a sincere and vigorous work. If his Biblical subjects be judged either by the *Tribute Money* in the Leeds Art Gallery, a work of his middle period, with its poor colour and woolly handling, or by the two versions of the famous *Death on the Pale Horse* in the Pennsylvania Academy—the small sketch of 1802, and the huge final picture, finished in 1817, when the painter was seventy-nine—we are forced to the conclusion that he had but one true and abiding excellence,

that of composition: for his draftsmanship, though conscientious, is uncertain, and sometimes failed him altogether, and his sentiment is stagey rather than dramatic. Still, in London, it was precisely the facile decorative quality of his work which gained him his great reputation, and, alone among the critics, at the outset, Horace Walpole had the shrewdness to apply the epithet "tawdry" to the classical subjects that he exhibited in 1764. We are forced to the conclusion that it would have been better for West's art, if not for his reputation and his pocket, if he had gone straight back to America from Italy, and undergone the severe discipline of a life of less ambitious portrait-painting.

For American art as a whole, however, it was a good thing that he came to London. Though perhaps his earliest American associate, and almost-pupil, in London, Matthew Pratt, did not take back to America as a result of his visit to West, to which reference has already been made, any very valuable knowledge, his picture now in the Metropolitan Museum, *The American Academy*, which was exhibited by him at Spring Gardens in 1766, shows something more than a sign-painter's skill of grouping, and something of the picture-sense which West was able better to impart to others than to use himself.

After all, what West became in England matters little to the history of American art: what does matter is what he brought with him, and what, through his American pupils, he sent back to America. West brought with him an overmastering love of beauty, a fertile if rather frigid imagination, and the two great elements of success, charm and luck. He gained in Italy the development of a sense of composition which must have been innate, and he carried through life a genius for developing the individuality of all those who came to him for instruction or advice; and so he sent back to America the founders of American art, unspoiled by his own artificiality and fortified in the estimation of their fellow-countrymen by the *cachet* of his name. He gave to America out of the more or less raw material that came to him, Gilbert Stuart, C. W. Peale, and Trumbull; Ralph Earle, whose

work is sometimes confused with that of Gilbert Stuart, though with little reason, for he never reached more than a respectable mediocrity—Washington Allston, his closest imitator and fervid worshipper; Dunlap, not a great painter but a faithful if romantic biographer; and S. F. B. Morse, destined to be the inventor of the Morse code of telegraphy, and to desert the art in which he might well have attained almost as great an eminence even as Gilbert Stuart himself. These men, and the influence of their work in America, were the contribution to the art of the young Republic, of the Historical Painter to King George III and President of the Royal Academy, who was painting the portrait of the King when the news was brought of the Declaration of Independence.

In this brief list there is one genius, Gilbert Stuart; one painter of splendid vigour and fine feeling, Trumbull; one, who swiftly evolved a definite Americanism of style, C. W. Peale; one, who might be styled West's own ambassador, repeating his faults as well as his virtues as to the manner born, Allston; and one fine portrait-painter stolen from art by science, Morse.

Among them all, Gilbert Stuart stands alone. Within his limitations—" he could never go below the fifth button "—he was the greatest pure painter America has produced; but in point of time Charles Wilson Peale (1741–1827) was his predecessor by nearly twenty years in the chronology of art in America.

Peale (1741–1827) was born at Chesterton, Maryland, and made attempts, successively in Annapolis and in Philadelphia, to obtain some training as a painter, but it was not till 1768, when he reached Boston and received help and advice from Copley, that his progress in the art was assured. Little more than a year later he found the means to go to London with introductions to West, with whom he remained four years, the greater part of the time as West's guest in his own house. His was a high-speed training, for in 1774 he was back in Annapolis, and from 1776 to 1779 was in Washington's army, eventually settling in Philadelphia, where, after a busy painting period of about six years, he

divided his time between portraiture and the formation of a natural history museum. Despite this spasmodic career, he was a sound, if uninspired painter, and until Stuart's return in 1793 easily held the foremost place in America. His portrait of Washington in the Metropolitan Museum is, it is true, ill-proportioned and unbalanced in design, and lacks unity of tone; it is an early work, with all the faults of inexperience, but with the promise of dignity to come, when once technical difficulties have been met and conquered: and the self-portrait in the Pennsylvania Academy, painted when he was eighty-three, shows these early faults overcome, and not only dignity, but harmonious tone and lively human interest achieved. Isham, rather unjustly, says that the background—his natural history museum—is " thinly painted in West's worst manner "; whereas it is, in fact, very skilfully and dramatically subordinated to the figure, with no more force or precision in the handling than its place in the design demands. More important still, it could not possibly be mistaken for an English work, although its technical tradition is wholly English. Its faults are those, not of a second-rate Englishman, but of an American " primitive," and its good qualities, its rather naïve human interest, and its subordination of style to personality, are equally American and not English. We may fairly call Peale the first truly American painter.

Although the first overseas adventure of Gilbert Stuart (1755–1828) in search of artistic training ended in disaster and inglorious return, it serves to emphasize a strain both in his ancestry and his training which might have been guessed from the work of his maturity, even if we had not the documentary evidence of its existence. He was the son of a Jacobite refugee from Scotland, and the grandson of a Presbyterian parson of Perth. His boyhood was spent in the midst of the Scottish colony of Newport; his first instructor was Cosmo Alexander, a Scot, who had painted and exhibited in London not long before, and who, when he returned to Scotland in 1773, took young Stuart with him and introduced him to Sir George Chambers. He was in Scotland when Allan Ramsay was at the height of

his powers, and Ramsay's pupil Martin was in a fair way to succeed him in public favour. Raeburn, a year Stuart's junior, was a jeweller's apprentice, just beginning to try his hand at miniature painting. There is no reason to believe that Stuart and Raeburn met, and his sojourn in Scotland was cut short untimely by the death, first of Alexander, and then of Chambers, and by 1774 he was back in Newport (by way of Nova Scotia), ragged and uncommunicative; but his first taste of European painting had been in the land of his forbears, and it had shown him the austere beauty of silvery tone, the touch, light but firm, of painters nearer to the French than to the English tradition, and had started him on his career with all the artistic instincts of his race awakened, as a defence against surrender to the facile fashions of art in London, when eventually he made his arrival there. Stuart was a Scottish painter in grain, and an American by the hazard of history and environment.

When he arrived in London in 1775 he might have gone under but for the friendship of Dr. Waterhouse, a Scot again, and for his own irrepressible buoyancy of nature. Little is known of his work during the first three years, but, partly through the generosity of Waterhouse and partly by his own efforts, he was at any rate able, when he eventually called upon West, probably through Waterhouse's intervention, to cut a decent figure, and showed no signs of privation. He was West's pupil for four years, but there is not a trace of West in any of his work. He never attempted to acquire West's one virtue, that of composition. His brush work, without being the least like that of Gainsborough, has the same airy inconsequent certainty and rightness. His colour, and his method of applying it, are three-quarters of a century or more ahead of his time, for now and then he approached the very edge of divisionism, with his irregular dots and strokes of incompletely mixed pigments. His method was extremely rapid, almost approaching direct painting, as for example in the unfinished portrait of Lord North, recently in the Hirsch Collection, London; yet in this same picture there is a singular reminiscence of France, both in colour and in pose. Instinctively

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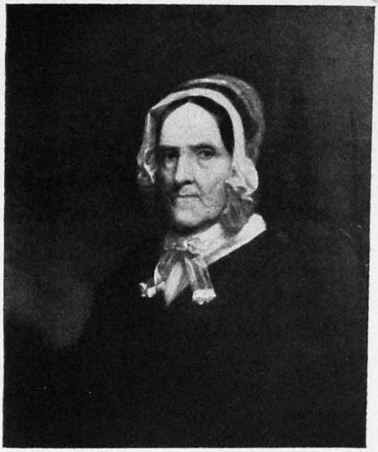


By courtesy Ehrich Gallery, New York

S. F. B. MORSE
Mrs. Bergen

By courtesy Ehrich Gallery, New York

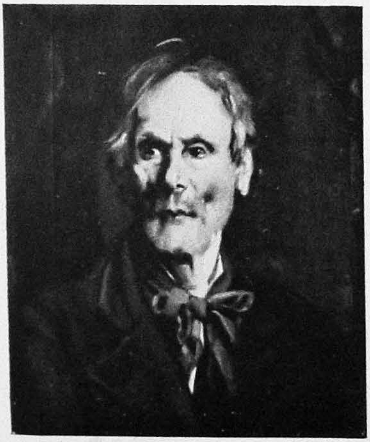
CHESTER HARDING
Mrs. B. Rush McConnell

By courtesy Ferargil Galleries, New York

T. SULLY
The David Children

By courtesy Macbeth Gallery, New York

WINSLOW HOMER
Eight Bells



By courtesy Ferargil Galleries, New York

F. DUVENECK
The Old Actor

By courtesy Ferargil Galleries, New York

JOHN LA FARGE
The Samoan Boatboy

one thinks of Fragonard and Chardin, rather than of any English painter.

In fact, Gilbert came to West only when he was, or seemed likely to be, at the end of his material resources, and when he came, he was already a fully developed Scottish painter of genius, whom West could teach nothing. Of his two portraits of West in London, that in the National Portrait Gallery, painted soon after 1778, is a conscientious attempt to assimilate West's method; but nothing can eradicate the Stuart grace, the Stuart genius for a lightly but surely recorded likeness. The picture in the Tate Gallery is Stuart unalloyed, with the silvery overcast tone on delicate green and blue, the Stuart freshness of complexion, almost artificial in its daintiness, the Stuart unaffectedness of human expression. The famous portraits at Boston of Washington and Martha Washington show the full fruition of the splendid certainty, the buoyant liveliness, the startling vitality, which are the hall-mark of this most fascinating painter. Scarcely ever did he burden himself with the weariness of a full-length ceremonial picture. His portrait of General Knox at Boston shows that he did not need to put his trust in any man's legs, to achieve dignity, swagger, movement. When he did paint a full-length, it was a lively, graceful figure, like that of *Mr. Grant skating in St. James' Park* (1782), which is in the Pelham-Clinton Collection—and in this picture, be it observed, the legs have something to do! When he returned to America, after five years of independence, success and magnificent extravagance in London, and—to avoid his creditors—five more in Dublin, just as exuberant and as successful artistically, he returned to America, leaving art in Great Britain—and a good many creditors—the poorer by reason of his going. After a couple of years in New York, he went to Philadelphia, and there achieved his ambition of painting Washington's portrait. It was not until 1805 that he settled in Boston, where he spent the remainder of his restless life, untiring to the end.

It is worthy of note, that although Stuart had style, and the stamp of his own personality is on all that he painted, he never sacrificed his sitters to a formula, as Romney did

invariably, and as Gainsborough also did at times. On the contrary, he gives them the fullest possible scope for their own individuality. Who can escape the dour reality of *Mrs. Yates* either the version in the T. B. Clarke Collection, and formerly in the Pennsylvania Museum, or that in the Boston Museum, sometimes strangely assigned to Ralph Earle? The half-finished *Mrs. Perez Morton* in the Worcester Museum almost betokens the surrender of the painter to the elusive quality of his subject, with her suddenly upraised arms; to the much earlier portrait of Mrs. William Abercromby of Glassaugh he gives a treatment almost as smooth and finished as the work of Cotes, as though fitting his manner to his rather primly aristocratic subject; and in the companion picture of her husband William, son of the General Abercromby who commanded at the battle of Ticonderoga, he uses a bolder brush, a richer colour, and a more compact design. He reacted sensitively to the character before him, and, like Sir Joshua Reynolds, translated it into terms of colour and touch: and this is true equally of his earliest and his latest work. He did not so much progress as change with changing moods and needs. We shall not look upon his like again in this story of American art.

There remain of the pupils of West two who really matter in American art history, Trumbull and Morse. In a way, they matter more than Stuart, who left no successors, no pupils to whom he could impart his secret, for his secret was just himself, that seemingly fortuitous and certainly incommunicable alliance of eye and brain and hand and temperament which is true genius, and can have no heirs.

John Trumbull, the son of Jonathan Trumbull, Governor of Connecticut and friend of Washington, the original "Brother Jonathan" and opposite (very opposite) number of John Bull, was already drifting, against the parental inclination, towards the career of an artist when as a lad of sixteen he was a precocious student at Harvard. After Lexington, he became adjutant of the first Connecticut regiment, and at Ticonderoga he was deputy adjutant-general to General Gates, with the rank of colonel, but soon

afterwards resigned his commission, owing to a fancied slight, and went to Boston, and back to his painting, in 1778. In 1780 he went to Paris, and thence, with an introduction from Franklin to West, to London, where West's immediate friendliness stood him in good stead. In the indignation which followed the hanging of Major André, he was arrested and imprisoned, but the personal intervention of West with the King made his life safe, and his imprisonment a matter of form; for he was allowed to paint in prison. Stuart painted his portrait, and after seven weeks the bail of West and Copley secured his freedom and return to America: but he was back again in 1784, and working hard in West's studio; the outcome of this visit was a marked advance in composition, and the *Battle of Bunker Hill*, painted in the following year, shows how strong West's influence had been upon him in this respect, though its small scale, and that of the *Death of General Montgomery*, of the same period, leaves no room for West's great failing of diffuse facility of technique. The historical work of Trumbull has been compared to that of Meissonier, but this is no compliment to the American, who was never betrayed into the miniaturist glitter of Meissonier; for the actual scale of his pictures is unimportant, in that it has no bearing upon their design, which is large in feeling, and full of movement.

His larger works, however, seem to show a lack of confidence, with arid spaces which contribute nothing to their meaning or dignity. This is especially noticeable in the series of historical portraits in the City Hall, New York, the majority of which would be the better for cutting down to half-lengths. The five years in London and Paris from 1784 to 1789 did him no good, for they robbed him of his early vigour and substituted only a rather dreary competence in West's manner. The *General Clinton* at New York, painted after his return to America, is a case in point. The portrait is vigorous, but the rest of the picture is a formula.

He was in London again in 1794 on a diplomatic mission, which lasted seven years, and during this visit returned with some success to historical painting; but a growing lack of

self-confidence sent him back to London to West, after four years in New York, during which time his most successful work was the posthumous portrait of Alexander Hamilton, from the bust by Ceracchi. There was no room, however, in London for a painter who, by now, was scarcely more than an echo of West, who was in his decline both as a painter and an artistic leader; on Trumbull's final return to America in 1812, he obtained the commission to paint four of the eight commemorative pictures in the Capitol at Washington, and these show that he had fatally absorbed the principles of a style of painting already moribund; in fact, so far as America is concerned, Trumbull did not so much set a standard as provide a starting-point for individual and national development. The fact that his touchy nature had not endeared him to his contemporaries secured that they and their successors should attempt not so much to follow his example as to correct his shortcomings. Vanderlyn (1776–1852), with his far sounder technical experience, and his complete independence of the West tradition, was on the spot, ready and anxious to prove his worth as an American painter owing nothing to England, and rich in his experiences of Paris under the Empire, and Rome in the great days when the artists of all Europe congregated there to learn, straight from the Italians of the distant past, the lessons that modern Italy could no longer teach them. How nearly Vanderlyn had learned these lessons may be seen in his *Ariadne* in the Pennsylvania Academy, and the painter who could gain a gold medal at the Paris Salon at the height of David's ascendancy, as Vanderlyn did in 1808 with his *Marius*, painted in Rome in 1807, had at least absorbed the classic lessons of pure draftsmanship; true, his Dutch ancestry was a help, for fine drawing comes more naturally to a Dutchman than to an Englishman; and the severe grace of the *Ariadne*, which was painted in Paris in 1812, is a true blend of France and the Netherlands. Three years later, Vanderlyn was in New York, and it is disappointing to find, in his full-length portrait of Monroe in the City Hall, little survival of the classic quality which had made him a high reputation in Paris when that city was the stronghold of

classicism. Perhaps it is not altogether surprising, when we consider that Vanderlyn, among the very first of American painters to be born an American citizen, had had his earliest training under two Scotsmen, Archibald Robertson in New York, and Stuart in Philadelphia; that, by the help of Aaron Burr, this was followed by five years in Paris, and a short visit to England, where he first met Washington Allston, who returned with him to Paris. Rome followed, and again Paris, where he was able to befriend his former patron, Burr, in the first years of his tragic fall; during the whole of this time he never lost touch with his compatriots, and it is clear that he regarded the whole of his time abroad as a period of qualification for practice in America upon American lines; and in America, apart from a very few opportunities of symbolic decoration on a large scale, the portrait obsession held the field. It is small wonder that Vanderlyn was bitterly disappointed at being passed over in favour of Trumbull in the matter of the commemorative paintings at the Capitol, for apart from such work his undoubted skill and versatility had little scope. It is interesting to note that as early as about 1801 he painted two views of Niagara, from which we may infer that the Dutch leaning towards landscape painting was in his blood. If he had lived a little later he might have been one of the most famous and characteristic, as he was one of the first and best equipped, of American painters.

As it was, however, his friend Washington Allston won, in his own day, the place which would better have been filled by a painter of more soundly based tradition, if of less nobility of sentiment, and though Allston is now well-nigh forgotten, or remembered only as a faithful bearer of the dying torch of West, his influence upon American art as a whole is far greater than is generally recognized. The incurable romance of his outlook pervades all his life and work. The enthusiast for West in London, and for Coleridge in Paris, grew naturally out of the boy whose lively imagination had battened on stories of bandits and witches and fairies, an imagination which found expression by means of an all too facile pencil. An infinite capacity for making friends put him under the spell of many varying

influences. Malbone, the accomplished miniaturist, West, with his kindly welcome and formulated art, Fuseli, with his wild imagination and bombastic design (" shockingly mad," said Walpole, " madder than ever, quite mad," of Fuseli's exhibit in the Academy of 1785), Vanderlyn, with his scholarly repose, all these influenced him in turn, but West, and his own innate sentimentality, most of all. As a painter, he was sure but shallow. His colour is weak and thin, and his design is formal to the point of banality. The portrait of S. T. Coleridge, in the National Portrait Gallery, London, in which he himself said that he had caught the likeness, but not, he feared, the soul of the subject, is a dreary, lifeless piece of work, and yet we know that he put his whole heart into the doing of it. In his *Prophet Jeremiah* (Yale School of Fine Art), the sublimity at which he aimed is turned to pompousness, and in his *Spanish Girl* in the Metropolitan Museum, although there is a pleasant sense of space, and of rightness in the placing of the figure, the atmosphere of meaningless sentimentality for sentimentality's sake is overpowering. Perhaps if he had returned to America from his second visit to London, before his great success there between 1811 and 1818 had set him in the groove which West had marked out for him, he might have gained at home the virility which was not needed in a London dominated by Academic standards, but it is to be doubted. He was a sentimentalist in grain, and as such, the forerunner of a long succession of sentimental painters who, both in England and America, held the popular favour against all comers. One of the very best of them in England was, in fact, an American and a pupil of Allston in London, namely, C. R. Leslie (1794–1859), whose early predilection for the theatre and theatre folk found expression in his maturity in the gentle touch of dramatic interest which redeems from mere sentimental story-telling the anecdotal painting for which he was justly famous; there is a queer element of the unexpected in the admiration for Allston which was felt by Samuel Finlay Breese Morse (1791–1872), who went to London with Allston, straight from college, in 1811, and in 1813 was particular to emphasize

that he was the pupil of Allston, not of West. It was a case of the attraction of extreme opposites, for while Allston was a romantic, imaginative Southerner, Morse was a clear-headed, scientifically-minded Northerner of Puritan stock: while Allston as a painter lived in an imaginary world, Morse was a vigorous and direct observer of realities. It cannot be said that he ever completed his development as a painter, for he never finally adopted any settled method of technique, painting at one time with freedom and thin but telling strokes, at another, with rich and glittering pigment, and equally successfully in both ways. Of all the historical portraits in the City Hall, New York, his *Lafayette* is by far the most striking, the most convincingly and uncompromisingly alive. Despite a certain *naïveté* of composition, it is emphatic in its demand on the attention, the intellectual rendering of an intellect, an intensely personal statement of an outstanding personality. Not far behind as a human record, are his renderings, in the same place, of John Stanford and William Paulding, the latter painted in the same direct swift fashion as the *Lafayette;* and the rich charm and seductive serenity of *Mrs. de Forest* (Yale School of Fine Arts) is as masculine a record of femininity as may be found anywhere. A lifetime of such portraits would have been ample compensation for the lack of a telegraphic code.

Samuel Waldo, yet another of West's pupils in London, was a better portrait-painter than his master, for while much of his work, especially that done in partnership with his collaborator Jewett, is a dull and pedestrian record of faces and clothes, he occasionally rose, as in his portrait of Andrew Jackson (Bloomingdale Collection), to a very high level both of characterization and quality of craft. He was only a short time in England, and practised continuously for nearly half a century in America after his return. His work, within its narrow limits, has dignity, and by dint of continual portrayal of American countenances, acquires in time a distinctly national flavour. Less American, but even less reminiscent of West, is the work of Thomas Sully (1783–1872), who obtained his earliest instruction from Bembridge and faced considerable privation in order to get to England,

where West treated him with the utmost kindness, giving him the freedom of his private collection for copying purposes; on his return to Philadelphia he had considerable success, and his contact with Stuart had a beneficial influence upon his style, especially in raising the key of his colouring, and in the handling of light. There is considerable delicacy in his work, and a pleasant note of freshness, which however sometimes becomes prettiness. His *Torn Hat* (Boston Museum) is a delightful study of light and shade on clear flesh tones, with precise but soft drawing, and though his portraits sometimes lack vigour, they have undeniable liveliness and charm, as may be seen in that of Dr. Coates in the Pennsylvania Hospital, Philadelphia. Occasionally he struck a note of vigour, as in the remarkable portrait in the City Hall, New York, of Jonathan Williams, Chief Engineer of the U.S. Army, 1805–12, a half-length painted with an astonishing freedom that takes one back to Reynolds' portraits of Admiral Keppel, though without any of Reynolds' weight of impasto or richness of colour. Indeed, underlying all Sully's best work is a hint of a French tendency towards subtlety of modelling and clearness of light, which he may have derived from the instruction given him in his youth by a French brother-in-law, M. Belzons, or possibly from a strain of Gallic ancestry. He was, in any case, an accomplished painter, worthy of a higher place than is generally assigned to him. He was sent in 1837 by the Philadelphia Society of St. George to England, to paint the portrait of the young Queen Victoria, a task of which he acquitted himself with a very courtly grace, and with great skill in choosing a pose and a colour-scheme which enabled him to make the most of the Queen's small stature, and of her pretty shoulders and complexion.

There is one other painter who, though certainly not great, presents so vividly that peculiar and intensely American quality in portraiture, which is hard to define, but may perhaps be described as showmanship, that no account of American painting would be complete without reference to him. This was the English-born John Wesley Jarvis (1780–1834), named after his uncle, the famous founder of

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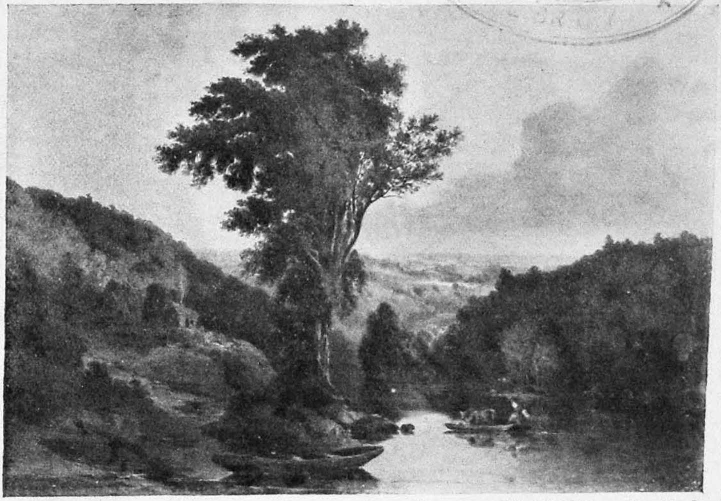


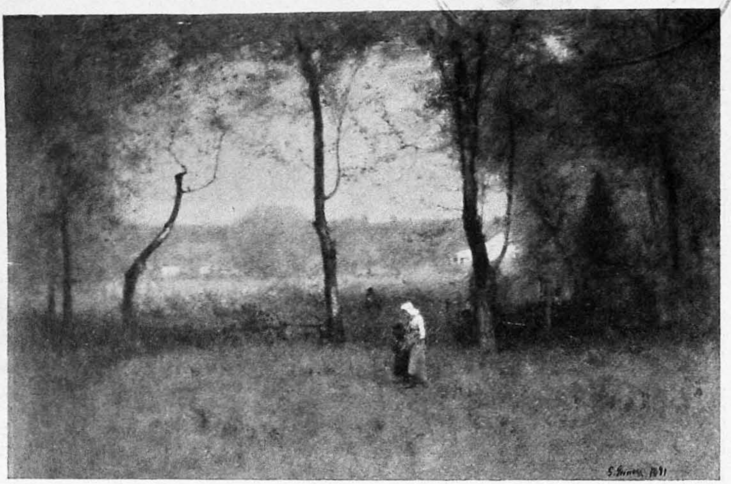
By courtesy Ehrich Gallery, New York

THOMAS DOUGHTY
Landscape

By courtesy Ehrich Gallery, New York

A. B. DURAND
Pastoral

DHANA... MUDALIAR



By courtesy Macbeth Gallery, New York

GEORGE INNESS
The Woodgatherers

By courtesy Macbeth Gallery, New York

HOMER D. MARTIN
Normandy Trees

Methodism, with whom he lived till he was five years old, when he joined his father in Philadelphia. There was nothing of the Methodist about Jarvis, who picked up his training as a painter in as haphazard a fashion as he spent his life. Equipped with a little instruction from old Matthew Pratt, West's friend, followed by an apprenticeship to a bad engraver named Strange, Jarvis set up in New York and succeeded as a portraitist, though as a painter he was always rather slapdash than brilliant. Some of his best work was done in the south, in Baltimore, Charleston, and New Orleans, and his rather extravagantly jovial disposition earned him a good deal of patronage and very likely facilitated his quick, though superficial, insight into the character of his sitters. There is always a note of swagger in his big full-length portraits, of which perhaps that of *Henry Clay* (City Hall, New York) sacrifices less of dignity to intimacy than the series of naval portraits in the same place. But all of them have an engaging air of friendliness which can but reflect the reaction of the sitter to the artist's own geniality. His pupil, Henry Inman (1801–1846), is disappointing, probably because Jarvis was a natural painter with little scientific backing for his easy practice of the craft, and the rather over-refined outlook of the younger man was incapable of being ruffled into virility by the breeziness of his mentor. His nearest approach to it is the very mild pleasantness of his *William Henry Seward* in the City Hall, New York. Grace rather than strength is Inman's aim, and in this picture he certainly attains it; but he cannot wholly relieve this prim figure, in the pleasant but rather vague landscape setting, from a depressing air of self-consciousness; and his colour, though harmonious and skilfully placed, has always a rather tentative quality.

But for the fact that he was a nephew of Gilbert Stuart, it would hardly be possible to call Gilbert Stuart Newton (1795–1835) an American painter, though he was his uncle's pupil in Boston for a time; for, that association having terminated with some abruptness, when the nephew proposed, in the flush of youthful vanity, to teach his uncle to paint, Newton went to London and stayed there, painting

genre and literary subjects with considerable success and in a free and lively style, of which his *Yorick and the Milliner* is an excellent example, and well justifies the comment of his friend C. R. Leslie, that " Newton is blessed with an exquisite eye for colour."

Here we may take our leave of the 18th-century tradition in America; for West and Stuart, who constituted the link with English training and tradition, could not live for ever. West died in 1820, and Stuart eight years later. Thereafter, though a few Americans came to London, and still fewer Englishmen paid painting visits to America, there was no closer tie between the schools than was afforded by the survival of the pupils of those two leaders of American artistic effort: and none of these was powerful enough to found a school for the coming generation. Moreover, life in America was changing, and always in a direction which widened the gulf between the old world and the new. A vigorous and growing population was pushing further westward into virgin country, and hacking out a civilization of its own, which had nothing in common with the long tradition that even down into the beginning of the 19th century called England " home " as Australia used to do forty years ago and less.

Still, there could have been no new generation of painters if the older men had not provided them in their own country with a source of study and a standard for their aims; and even those older men, such men as Peale and Morse and Waldo, had felt and rendered the spirit of the new nation, and of a new type of civilized man, which was not English, but American; and so they served to bridge the gap in some degree. All the same, when the new men came along, the contrast between their work and that of their predecessors was so great as to be startling now, when we see it in the clear perspective of a hundred years.

Indeed, it is not difficult to name the giant of the new era, for Chester Harding (1792–1866) stands a head and shoulders above all his contemporaries, and indeed above his successors for many a day. A painter of pure native genius, he was born at Conway, Massachussetts, but his

boyhood, from fourteen onwards, was spent in the then untamed wilds of Madison County, New York. After the war of 1812, his talent still undiscovered, he tried many ways of making a living for himself, and very soon for a wife and family as well, with little luck and great labour, till a housepainting job in Pittsburg led him into the trade of a sign-painter, in which he had some small success. Fired by the example of an itinerant portrait-painter, he tried, with his sign-painting tools, to paint a portrait of his wife, and got a likeness and a vocation. A dozen more such efforts, and he moved away to Paris, Kentucky, and set up as a portrait-painter, at twenty-five dollars a picture, and in six months earned enough to go to Philadelphia Academy. To cut a long story short, he in his turn became an itinerant portrait-painter, eventually reaching Boston, where he found immediate success in Stuart's own stronghold!—and with justice, for his work has the grip, the vigour, the steadiness, of the man's own determined and balanced character. It has sweetness too—as in his portrait of *Mr. Daniel Webster*, that might have been grim but for the sure drawing of the quick smile, and the keen and lively interest in the irregularly rendered eyes. There is crudeness as well, but it is the crudeness of a forceful, not of a clumsy hand. His success in England, whither he went not so much to learn as to earn, was as great as in America. The blazing honesty of the man, whether in the flesh or on canvas, commanded respect and liking, both on his first visit in 1823 and again in 1843. He seems to have contemplated settling in England, for he was joined by his family there in 1825, but he returned to America in 1826, making his headquarters at Boston. His contemporary, Francis Alexander (1808–1881), rose from equally crude beginnings, and had little regular instruction, though he was helped by Trumbull in New York, and by Stuart in Boston, where he enjoyed considerable success for some years: but a visit to Italy in 1831 tended to rob him of some strength, while it certainly added grace to his work; he is definitely less national in character than Harding, and he settled eventually in Italy, leaving no influence on the art of his native country.

Indeed, it can scarcely be said that the break with English 18th-century painting resulted in any immediate progress of the purely American school. Rather, at first, it created a gap, which the native painters could not wholly fill, and in the 'thirties of the 19th century it was still a profitable venture for competent Englishmen to come to America for short portrait-painting expeditions—a kind of glorification of the itinerant painter's trade. Occasionally the process was reversed; for example, S. S. Osgood (1808–1885), whose work seems to show that he must have studied in England in close contact with the work of Lawrence, exhibited at the Royal Academy from a London address in 1836, 1838 and 1839. His exhibit there in 1836 was the portrait of Miss Harriet Martineau, which he had painted at Worthington, U.S.A., in the previous year, during Miss Martineau's American tour. This picture is now in the possession of the Martineau family in Birmingham. He probably returned to America in 1837, for in the following year a portrait of President van Buren was among his pictures at the Royal Academy; the exact date of his death, which took place in California, is uncertain. His drawing is free, and his colouring warm and vigorous, and his portraits have a more pictorial quality than many of the productions of his English contemporaries; but the taste of the time did not soar beyond a good likeness, and while this resulted in the production of a great many conscientious but unimaginative paintings, it did not stimulate originality or strong personal quality among American painters, and the few real artists among them could make but little headway against an outlook which was soon to find the satisfaction of its needs in the new photography. John Neagle (1799–1865) had more vigour than the majority of his contemporaries, and could paint not only features but also character with directness and spirit: but the period is on the whole a dreary and uninspiring interlude. As the centre of artistic activity shifted from Boston to New York, and, to be quite frank, financial prosperity became of more importance than the development of a national and native culture, the painter (whose outlook and experience is after all much the same as

that of his fellow-men) became an industrious caterer, on the one hand for the vanity, and on the other for the sentimentality (that invariable outlet of the "hardheaded business man") of his patrons, who, as time went on, became of a type less and less able to judge their productions by any standard but that of their interest in the subject portrayed. The farmyard and tavern genre of W. S. Mount was lively, true, and racy of the soil, but no one could venture to place it beside even the least of the Dutch painters in this type of subject. It is only fair to say that though this period produced in England the greatest work of Turner, Cox and Müller, it was also prolific of the worst kind of sentimental genre and photographic portraiture and landscape. The main difference was that whereas some of the English critics at least knew how futile such work was, there was no one in America to protest against it, so that it flourished unchecked.

In fact, it was not the artists so much as the patrons who made the first move towards an improved taste, and that, more by accident than design; for about the middle of the last century began the westward flow of European paintings, both contemporary works and "old masters," which, so far as the latter are concerned, has steadily increased in volume down to the present day: not that the first importations were, in the matter of artistic merit, much improvement on the American product. The old masters began to come fairly early, and a sorry lot they were for the most part, with here and there a gem. They were followed by a flood of the most sentimental German contemporary work, mostly by painters of the tight and laborious school of Düsseldorf, with the flashy sentiment and competent workmanship of Munich hard upon their heels. It was a dreadful invasion, and it sent the young painters of America in hordes to those two schools to learn the trick. That they made of their training there such good use as they did is a credit to their honesty and earnestness, but it was many years before American painting shook off the incubus of influences which encouraged precisely that slick artificiality which was its worst enemy. The national elements of vigorous realism and

strongly defined character, that we have seen in the work of Chester Harding, seemed to have been lost in a welter of mawkish imagery like that of Daniel Huntington's (1816–1906) *Mercy's Dream* (Metropolitan Museum, New York), which was immensely popular in his day; and the power of this type of taste to influence a painter is the more vividly realized, when it is recalled that Rome and Florence, not Germany, gave Huntington his training, and that his native tendencies, so completely suppressed in this picture, may be seen in his landscape work, which is of the very literal, but none the less vital and convincing manner of the Hudson River School.

In these evil days, which were to continue till the influence of France broke up their complacent dullness, the torch of American art was in fact borne by the landscape painters almost without aid from any of their fellows. A shining exception was William Page (1811–1885), whose work, despite its restless variations of technique, shows both strong originality and an innately scholarly approach to the work of such of the old masters as lay within his ken. Among his portraits is one of Robert Browning, which the poet described as "magnificent." There is a Gallic subtlety in some of his portraits, and towards the end of his life he captured something of the richness of Venetian colour. He had in him the makings of a great painter, baulked by his environment. Henry Peters Gray (1819–1877) attained more nearly to the possibilities that lay within him. Huntington gave him the elements of his art, but he was more at home in Italy than in America, and there is an echo of the rich romance of Giorgione in some of his best work, that is simply astounding in its time; for he achieved sentiment without degenerating into sentimentality, and incident without becoming a prattling story-teller; and with it we find a soundness of drawing, a balanced reticence in design, and a warmth of tone, which raise his work far above the majority of American figure subjects of his generation.

It must be owned that the lessons that Düsseldorf could have taught to American painters and public were not, for the most part, assimilated. Emmanuel Leutze (1816–1868)

can hardly be called an American painter, for he was born in Germany, and though his boyhood was spent in America, he was trained in Düsseldorf and spent most of his life there: but he ended his days in America and painted popular American subjects; and his well-known *Washington crossing the Delaware* (Metropolitan Museum, New York) displays an amazing facility in complicated figure composition, which would be dramatic but for its dull and commonplace technique, which makes no mistakes because it takes no risks. Yet this facility, which has in it all the necessary ingredients of "mass-production" story-telling, remained, perhaps fortunately, without successful imitators in America; and we have to turn to America's own inalienable product, her landscape beauty, to find the source of America's artistic inspiration and progress down to the days of the Civil War.

The foundations of the American school of landscape painting had been laid early in the century. Thomas Doughty (1793–1856) was its pioneer, and his *River Glimpse* (Metropolitan Museum) shows that while technically he was inclined to be laborious, he had a largeness of vision and a natural sense of composition something like that of the Norwich painter, John Crome; indeed, it is well worth noting that, just as in England, no great school of landscape painting arose until English artists turned to their own surroundings for inspiration, and either threw tradition overboard, as Wilson did towards the end, or used it eclectically as Crome did, or ignored it altogether, as Constable did, so in America, a really national art did not arise until men with no tradition transcribed as faithfully as their practically untaught powers allowed, the colours and forms and atmosphere of their native land.

It is easy to decry the early landscape painters as photographic. The wonder is that they were not more so. Asher Brown Durand (1796–1886) was an engraver till he was over forty, a portrait-painter of no mean order down to 1840, and it was only after a year's journeying in England and Italy that he devoted the rest of his long life to landscape painting. The mark of his training as an engraver is strong upon him, in the minutely rendered detail and carefully

balanced tones. Although his rendering of nature is consequently almost photographic, it is none the less sympathetic, endowed with a restrained and sober colour-sense, and by no means lacking in personal feeling. That this personal quality could develop on occasion into something approaching imaginative dignity may be seen by considering together two of his works in the Metropolitan Museum, *In the Woods*, which is noble in design, though laboured in execution, and the *Judgment of Gog*, which reminds one of Turner, in its dramatic use of a multitude of small figures and in the impressive distribution of the gigantic landscape masses. There is no doubt that he was influenced both by Turner and Claude; but in the naturalistic aspect of landscape, he was his own guide, and except perhaps in composition, there is no indication that the work of Constable made any impression upon him, which is scarcely remarkable, seeing that Constable's battle for impressionism was by no means won when Durand was in England, and his own method was already set in diametrically opposite traditions.

Thomas Cole (1801–1848) was English born, and had already had some training as a wood-engraver when he arrived in America at the age of nineteen. He was primarily self-taught, and his bent was towards landscape from the first. He faced considerable privation in order to obtain some two years' instruction in painting at Philadelphia, and then found success in New York, through the support of Colonel Trumbull and Durand. He studied in England in 1829–1830, and in Italy in the following year, when he was strongly impressed, if we may judge from his work, by Salvator Rosa. There are also suggestions of Richard Wilson in his colour and composition, and of Turner and Rosa in his rather extravagantly dramatic style and choice of subject. The sentiment of his pictures was approved by the public of his time, but towards the end of his life he was blamed for insincerity towards nature—an interesting side-light on the taste of the time, which was as photographically inclined in landscape as in portraiture, and offered no outlet for the imaginative rendering of natural forms. Cole was

certainly a painter of unequal merit, often weak and stilted in composition, as in his *Expulsion from Eden*, sometimes extravagant to the point of grotesqueness, as in the *Titan's Goblet*, but never lacking in real landscape vision. Nothing could be simpler than the arrangement of his *Roman Aqueduct*, in the Metropolitan Museum (where both the preceding examples of his work are also to be found), yet its dignified sense of space makes it an impressive and convincing record of the artist's emotional experience. In fact, Cole, as an emotional landscape-painter, was well ahead of his time in America, and his success was due rather to the moral than the aesthetic value of his work. It is not surprising, therefore, that he, and Durand in the approximately similar aspect of his work, founded no school; yet they are the founders of American landscape painting, for they bridged the gap between the taste for moral and narrative genre, and for landscape painting pure and simple. The fact that the name given to the first recognizable group of American landscape painters, the "Hudson River School," was in the first instance a derisive nickname, is sufficient indication that at first, even "portraits of places" could find but little foothold in popular esteem. It is an extraordinary thing that all civilizations have to reach a fairly advanced stage of security and sophistication before they are able to realize, even dimly, that every prospect pleases and only man is vile. Judging by the fact that to this day it is only the portrait-painter who can reckon on a living, the latter part of the aphorism has scarcely got home yet.

However that may be, landscape, except as a mere adjunct to the human form, more or less divine, always has to go through a stage of literal "portraiture" before it can become an independent art, and a free medium of the artist's personal outlook: and it was only very shortly before the inception of the "Hudson River" group of painters, that European landscape had progressed beyond the initial stages. In Europe, it had escaped the photographic phase for the simple reason that photography did not exist to set the standard, and Gainsborough had begun by painting landscapes as if they were portrait-backgrounds usurping

the whole of the canvas; but even he had tended in the direction of leaf-for-leaf detail, and the horrible relapse of England into literal representation in the mid-19th century (unintentionally fostered by the Pre-Raphaelites) more than counterbalanced the comparative freedom of landscape beginnings in the pre-photographic era. Even the success of Constable in France could not leaven the unimaginative love of detail of the great majority of English painters and patrons; so it is small wonder that America had to go through the unmitigated photographic phase from the beginning.

Even among the pioneers, however, there were men who made a brave fight for a more personal and imaginative rendering of landscape. As a whole, the Hudson River School moved, imperceptibly but logically, away from the formal brown note, minute detail, and rather stilted composition of John Kensett (1818-1873), by way of the livelier colour and broken light of Whittredge and the grandiose design and dramatic atmospheric effects of F. E. Church (1826–1900), Cole's pupil, to the real though faltering impressionism of Inness, Wyant and Martin. Men like Moran (1829-1901), whose landscapes of rocky torrents and mighty trees are marked by a semi-sentimental literalism reminiscent of Henshaw, Shayer or Peter Graham, and Bierstadt (1829–1902), German born and German trained, who spread the competent dullness of the Düsseldorf technique over large canvases of large subjects with wearisome adequacy, provided a supply of easy popular painting, while the men with something real to say worked steadily forward towards the goal of truly personal expression.

It was through them that American art first came into spiritual contact with the art of France, and gained thereby the thing that it had hitherto lacked almost completely, namely, a sound technical basis suited to its aesthetic needs. It was through them, too, that fresh links were forged with English art—a new art since the days of West and Stuart, the art of Constable and Turner. Although it was not as students, but as practising artists, that the first American landscape painters went to Europe, they were quick to

learn what they needed to learn, and equally quick to turn aside from what was no use to them. What they needed most was technical ability of a particular kind—the kind which enables a man to set down unerringly his own impression of his subject. The laborious orderliness of Düsseldorf, the labour-saving cleverness of Munich, were of no use in such a task. Rather, the peculiarly French blend of sound technical knowledge, based on a long tradition of respect for craftsmanship, with vigorous and even rebellious individuality, was what was needed to equip the American painter, and it was in France, in the ateliers of Gerôme and Couture, and under the spell of the Barbizon painters, that they found it. George Inness (1825–1894) was the first to give real effect in his work to the spirit, as opposed to the material actuality, of American landscape, and he owes his power to do so entirely to his patient assimilation of French thoroughness in method and to the revelation of the temperamental possibilities of a landscape subject which came to him from his acquaintance with the work of Corot and Rousseau. His whole painting life was one of steady progress from mere representation towards a well-developed and intensely personal impressionism, and he is almost the first of American painters to convey the impression of possessing enough command of his craft to do justice to himself as well as to his subject. It was precisely the lack of this technical sureness which had defeated Cole and Church in their efforts to express their emotional reaction to landscape beauty, so that the one was driven back on to dramatic allegory and the other on to melodramatic exaggeration of scenic and atmospheric effects. What they had failed to do for lack of aesthetic and technical experience, Inness accomplished by the thoughtful and scholarly suppression of inessentials, and by the exercise of an exquisite and intensely personal sensibility to the tonal relations of his subject, as it appealed to him at the moment. In his day, he was an "artist's artist," much in advance of the popular taste of his time, though it is hard to understand why this should have been so, in face of the simple truth and delicate distances of his *Peace and Plenty*, or the glowing unity of *Autumn Oaks*, both in the

Metropolitan Museum, New York; it is easier to understand that a public that enjoyed Moran's *Solitude* might have been puzzled by Inness' *Summer*, in the Hackley Gallery, Muskegon, Mich.; for that is scarcely more than a play upon a very subtle scale of lights: but it is one of his latest works, and comparison with the much earlier New York examples shows how definitely progressive was the whole life of this remarkable painter, whose example inspired so many of his contemporaries and successors that he may almost be regarded as the father of American landscape painting.

His closest adherent, A. H. Wyant (1836–1892), even threw overboard his German training to follow in his footsteps. In him, too, we find the same progressive quality, and the same contrast between the rather formal composition and colour of his earlier work and the broad, emphatic directness of his latest landscapes. A typical contrast is that between his *Broad Silent Valley* (G. A. Hearn Collection), with its rather self-conscious sentiment, and *Evening*, in the Hackley Gallery. A superficial glance would suggest that he had exchanged the influence of Corot for that of Diaz. What really happened is that he has developed a quicker response to his own moods, and a more forcible method of expressing it.

A third painter who counts for much in this critical period of transition is Homer D. Martin (1836–1892), who, beginning with all the defects of imperfect technical knowledge, seemed likely to be little else than a less formal Kensett. Again, the Barbizon influence proved the deciding factor, and Martin, whose very real love of natural beauty had been strangled by the limitations of a timidly rigid technique, found its outlet in the congenial atmosphere of a Paris where, by now, the Barbizon painters had won the tardy recognition of the critics, and where the air was full of the new gospels of the luminists. From his work the last vestige of groping disappeared, and, in such a picture as *View on the Seine* (Metropolitan Museum), he is a world away from the tentative beginnings of his youth.

Paris, Luxembourg

J. M. WHISTLER

Portrait of the Artist's Mother

Modern American Painting

America now enters definitely into comparison with Europe. In a single century, she had started with the tradition, but without the technique, of England, had experimented with, and, after a time virtually discarded, the methods of the German schools, and now may almost be said to have started afresh with the technique, but without the tradition, of France. It was no small achievement, but there was still one inherent weakness to be overcome, a weakness which is less marked among the landscape painters than among the painters of figure subjects and portraits. This was the lack of a national tradition, and the consequent absence of any strong tie between the brilliant artist, fully equipped for self-expression in the studios of Paris, and the native land. The vigorous and contentious art-life of Paris, and the equally vigorous, but tolerantly curious, Philistinism of London, exercised an irresistible attraction upon artists, who, if they returned home, would find no such stimulating conditions, and Europe has robbed America of some of her greatest painters in consequence. The *cri-de-cœur* of one of those who did return is a page of history. It was William Morris Hunt (1824–1879) who said, " In another country I might have been a painter ": and the saddest part of it is that it was true. If Hunt had remained in France, he might have become, like Whistler, a painter of world-significance. It was not merely that in going to America, he lost the benefit of close association with the Barbizon group, and especially with Millet, for whom he had a profound respect and much affinity of feeling, nor was it merely that he was no longer close to Couture, from whom he had received a training that had set him well on the road towards the mastery of a bold, warm method eminently suited to his needs. Far more serious than the loss of these was his transplantation into an environment which deprived him of the stimulus both of keen criticism and ready understanding. Even in Boston, which was then far ahead of New York

in the appreciation of painting, he was first decried, and eventually admired and respected rather than understood, and his development was irreparably checked by this lack of comprehension, and by a blindness not his own, but that of his public, to the defects of which he himself was painfully aware, but which he could not correct for lack of the intelligently controversial atmosphere of Paris. There are immense possibilities in his work, which is splendidly represented at the Boston Museum, and it is interesting to observe how, from the small self-portrait painted in 1849, by way of the *Hurdy-Gurdy Boy* (1851), we come gradually to the full technical development of the *Girl Reading*, in which the influence of Millet, while at its height, is tempered by the artist's own less rugged personality; and, if these be set beside the *Bathers* with its delicacy of poise and swift freedom of execution, it is possible at once to realize both the possibilities and the limitations of a painter of lovely inspiration and undeveloped command of his medium.

It may be heresy to assert that John La Farge (1835–1910) was also a sufferer by his return to America, but it is impossible to resist the conclusion that a man to whom the scholarship of technique was so widely interesting, and who possessed so sensitive an analytical faculty in the presence of (to most eyes) the perfectly ordinary and obvious phenomena of light, would not have developed more boldly in a community more attracted by problems of aesthetic and technique than that of New York in the 'seventies. A Frenchman in all but the place of his birth, he ought by all reason to have been a French painter: whereas nothing is further from the eventual fact. He was immensely receptive —he can remind one in his earlier work, now of his friend Hunt (and incidentally of Couture, in whose studio he worked for a short time), now of the Italian old masters whom he studied in the Louvre, and again, later, of the Pre-Raphaelites—and even, yet again, of Puvis de Chavannes, with whom he had perhaps more in common than any other: yet he used, rather than imitated, all these, and superimposed upon each of them in turn his own gentle but insistent personality. He had all the material in him for a colourist of

rare quality; his drawing has something of the quiet yet detailed grandeur of the 16th-century Italians; and his decorative sense is a blend of the Italian Renaissance and Puvis de Chavannes, which reached its culmination in the *Ascension* in the Church of that invocation at New York. Half-mystic, half-craftsman, he still leaves one wondering what he might have been had he lived in another country, and perhaps even in an earlier age.

In vigorous and violent contrast, essentially of his own time, and an American to the marrow despite deliberate self-exile, James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903), like Sargent and Mary Cassatt later on, is a classic example of the American who did not run the risk of blunting the fine edge of his talent by using it upon the tough material of American artistic opinion. This is not to say that he was not a fighter—all the world knows how he revelled in baiting his public—but simply that he preferred to meet, in London, critics who were amusing (and amused), to those who, in America, would have been, in his estimation, much too serious, but quite incompetent, and consequently dull. He was probably right, both in leaving Paris, and in not going to America; for Paris in the 'seventies was the battleground of great men, giants like Manet and Degas, whose sincerity was relentless, and who were prepared to go to all lengths to uphold the truth as they understood it. The man who turned his signature into a butterfly had no such mission. His purpose was the enjoyment of life and of the visible world, and the recording of that enjoyment by an art which was as light, as capricious, as penetrating as himself.

In fact, it was himself. It is his only sincerity. It reveals startlingly the man who in all other aspects of his life was so completely encased in the pose of self-esteem as to be quite invisible. His indifference to criticism is sufficiently shown by the fact that he preferred to Paris, where, in 1867, his *White Girl* was praised by the more comprehending of the critics, London, where all his work evoked at first nothing but indiscriminate and often stupid abuse. After all, there was some fun to be got out of Ruskin, not so much because Ruskin had not, but because the British public had, a sense

of humour, and enjoyed the dog-fight. An American in London in the early 'seventies was just enough a foreigner to be allowed a good deal of latitude, and Whistler took full advantage of it. The little man with the eyeglass, the little beard, and the searing wit, became a legend, became "Jimmy"; expanded, flourished, and etched and painted at his own sweet will; and while, during his lifetime, he had the satisfaction of knowing himself acclaimed where he had been derided, those keen wits of his were perfectly well aware that it was the personality, not the painter, who had triumphed; and knowing quite well in his inmost hidden mind that he was a great painter, probably he got an additional malicious pleasure out of the fact that even those for whom he could do no wrong had never grasped, and were never likely to grasp, how great he really was.

That could not have happened in America, where he would have been merely one of millions of Americans, and where he would have been taken seriously, and so, misunderstood beyond hope of reprieve. It could not have happened in France, where he would have been one among scores of other painters, who were striving to convince the world rather than to bemuse it. So Whistler chose the soil in which his genius could grow unchecked and flower unpruned save by his own instinctive sense of fitness. That he was a genius there can be no doubt. That he exercised in England an influence which still persists is plain; and that the painter, not the mountebank, was the real Whistler, the consistency, the purity, the marvellous self-restraint of his work proclaims. Whistler's training was as varied, as elusive, as capricious as the man himself. He was two years with Gleyre in Paris, but this left no mark on his work, nor can it be said that there is any trace of it, apart from that of confident rightness (of his own kind) in composition, and even in that respect he owed far more to his delight in Japanese prints than to any European tradition. His friendship with Fantin-Latour, on the other hand, may well have enabled him to develop his innate sense of values and of subtle gradation of subdued colour, and from Courbet, to whom he himself acknowledged indebtedness, he may have

got the indefinable largeness which pervades all his work: but in the main, his art is absolutely his own, and almost full-grown from the start. There is little to choose in maturity between the *Girl in White* of 1867 and the *Little Rose of Lyme Regis*, at Boston, of the end of his active career, or the very similar *Study in Rose and Brown* at Muskegon. The period from 1872 to 1875 in which he painted the *Portrait of his Mother* (Luxembourg), the *Portrait of Carlyle*, the *Miss Alexander* (Tate Gallery) and *Rosa Corder*, also saw the production of the brilliant *tour de force*, the *Music Room*, with its masterly reduction of uncompromising detail, in a scale of blacks and whites, and garish reds and greens, to the discipline of a perfectly ordered design: and the man who could produce such a picture in the same breath, so to speak, with the *Miss Alexander*, simply as a kind of controversial counterblast, was not merely versatile. He was a man to whom painting was as much a language as speech itself—even more so, for what he painted meant more to him than what he said.

One is simply bewildered nowadays, to think that the *Falling Rocket* (*Battersea Bridge*) should have sent Ruskin into paroxysms of fury: not because it is ordinary now—it will never be that—but because it is so absolutely natural in its austere finality, in the total elimination of every distracting element that could divert attention from, and so destroy, the arresting beauty of a single moment that cannot recur, and must be seized in all its instantaneous unity, or lost altogether. Whistler might well turn in his grave to hear himself called a sentimentalist, but can it be denied that the lasting value of his work lies in its tenderness, the gentleness with which it cherishes the memory of a moment's joy? Romance is at the bottom of all his work, the romance of girlhood and womanhood, of lovely old age; the romance of the tangled houses of old Thames-side, of Cremorne lights stabbing her broad waters, of a splash of golden fire against a moon-blue sky, of the silent shapes of barges sliding down the stream: and just because it found no other utterance in his life of poses and prickles, it comes out in the full force of its uncontaminated simplicity in his work, that

no one understood so long as he lived to mask its secret by his own aggressive externality.

Small chance would he have had in America, where sentiment and romance called for, and got, a more robust and a more obvious interpretation at the hands of men like Duveneck and Winslow Homer, and where Walter Shirlaw (1836–1909), in landscape, was successfully grafting on to a Munich training a certain breadth and freshness of his own, as in his *Shepherd and Flock* at Muskegon, and, in figure work, was perpetuating with an easily gained success all the most sugary artificialities of the Munich tradition.

Frank Duveneck (1848–1919) was indeed almost as much a Munich painter as an American, and in a very different category from Shirlaw. There is in his brushwork a vigour and a freedom that exceeds that of his German contemporaries and a gusto and humour in his treatment of his very varying figure-subjects which went straight to the comprehension of his public. He was entirely without subtlety of feeling, and though as time went on his rich colour became more subdued, he never became even remotely subjective in his point of view. His importance lies chiefly in his vigorous prolongation of the school of story-telling genre, which all through history has occupied so many good painters and so few great ones.

An outstanding figure for many years in American art was Winslow Homer (1836–1910), who, beginning as a magazine illustrator in 1859, carried throughout his life the power to state on canvas an incident or a situation with telling and often moving reality. During and after the Civil War he produced many subject pictures, full of humanity and open air, and keeping firmly in check all tendency to sentimentality. Gradually, however, he came to making the sea his own especial subject, and as a marine painter pure and simple he has no rival among American painters. He painted the sea quite literally, with no romance but that of a very deep and true understanding. The human actors in these scenes are neither more nor less than real, but they have the dignity as well as the commonplace of their reality. Whether in *The Fog Warning* at Boston, or *The Life*

Line or the *Watching the Breakers* of the J. F. Braun Collection, or in the rocky seascape without figures, *Eastern Point* (Phillips Andover Academy), or in a score of other examples from his prolific brush, there is the same unabated honesty and directness of presentation that reminds one, in its unimaginative but sympathetic love of the subject, of Napier Hemy's *Youth*, or Henry Moore's *Newhaven Packet*. He had, however, another side to his art, which is well seen in his powerful water-colour, *Palm Tree*, *Nassau*, where the cold brilliance of the colouring is in truly imaginative harmony with the wind-bent silhouette of the dark palm tree in the foreground, and there is a fine sense of pattern in the distribution of the masses of strong colour, against the almost neutral groundwork of a sky full of movement. In grip of design and power of summary statement, his water-colour often surpasses his work in oil, and mitigates a tendency to rely too much upon actuality of detail.

Broadly speaking, Homer owes nothing to Europe, and consequently his affinities are neither German nor French, but definitely English; but by now the formative process of a real American school was proceeding rapidly, and in the work of American artists, working in America, it was now no longer the artist's foreign training which flavoured his work, but his own temperament and outlook. Thomas Eakins (1844–1916) was a pupil of Gérôme, but, apart from certain echoes of France in his technique, which was to the last unequal, he remained distinctively American, and very powerfully and effectively so. He had a vigour of attack and a simple forcefulness which reminds one more of S. F. B. Morse than of any European painter. There is not a trace of affectation or straining after effect, and the inspiring factor is always his keen enjoyment of his subject, whatever it might be. His river and sailing pictures have space and movement, and his interiors—such as the masterly *Gross Clinic* and the very similar subject, the *Agnew Clinic*, use to the full the dramatic value of massed light and shadow, without departing by a hairbreadth from the reasonable and normal probabilities. His work has at once spontaneity and sobriety, and though it is almost

photographic in its complete realization of a scene, this very completeness is achieved by a studious suppression ot irrelevant elements. In portraiture of women there is some lack of grace, for he was essentially masculine both in his outlook and his actual methods of painting, and his very restricted range of colour did not lend itself to charm so much as to strength.

W. Merritt Chase is every whit as American, but with this difference, that while to Eakins the technical aspect of painting was a means to an end, to Chase, with his Munich dexterity turned to peculiarly individual account, the joys of seeing and of painting were inseparably bound up with one another. He was not a " Munich School " man, in the least. All he got from Munich was skill, for he soon abandoned the Munich formulæ of colour and chiaroscuro, raising the key of his work, and developing a realism of textures which in the end made him a painter purely of externals; regarded as personalities, his portraits lack character, but never brilliance. His landscapes are completely without any suggestion of any personal reaction to anything but their purely objective aspect as arrangements of colour, light and and varying surfaces.

Nor would it be possible to mistake J. Alden Weir for anything but an American, despite his superficial suggestion of the Paris of Manet—and of Whistler, from whom he differs fundamentally in his severely objective attitude towards his subject. His portraits of women—the *Rose-Pink Bodice*, the *Palm Leaf Fan* (Pennsylvania Museum) and the like, follow solely the suggestive train of a scheme of light and colour. They are not concerned, as contemporary French painting was, with method or principles, but only with results; and this may be the reason for the facility with which Americans working in Paris, after studying with one master, shifted their aims, rather than their methods, in the direction of another. As Whistler studied with Gleyre, but felt the influence of Courbet, so Weir studied with Gérôme, and then aimed, in his own fashion, at an impressionist goal. In the same way, though it is the fashion, both in America and in France, to regard Mary

Cassatt as a French painter, irretrievably lost to America and irreparably attached to the French impressionist school, she is nothing of the sort, but utterly and unmistakably American. Her multitude of mothers and children, with their delicate play of high-keyed light and shade, the underlying dominance of pure line holding them together in an airy design, may be French in the source, but they are not French in the use, of their method. Whether in the slighter form of her *Femmes et Enfant* (Detroit Museum of Art) or in the more fully elaborated *Mother and Child* in the Braun Collection, all are natural, lively, human, before they are pictures at all. Though they are, in fact, technically sure, subtle, and sincere, that is to her a secondary consideration as it never was to any French painter, least of all to the impressionists and luminists with whom her affinity as a painter is closest.

What might have been made of George Fuller (1822–1884) if he had had more opportunity than was given him by a single hasty tour of European galleries, of gaining an insight into the possibilities of sure draftsmanship and luminous colour, must remain a matter of regretful conjecture; for his work as we know it, though more than touched with an anecdotal flavour which takes us back in spirit to the romanticists, had the beginnings of a rarely imaginative handling of values; and the similar case of Albert P. Ryder, with his limited and most uncertain technique, his exquisitely delicate colour sensibility, and his dream-like imagination, seems to show that while America now had her painters, her teachers and her native technical standards were still sadly to seek.

Still, in one aspect of painting, the development, mainly on the basis of French training and methods, was home-grown, and, if not violently progressive, at any rate gave wide scope to individual feeling, and expression. This was landscape painting, which in the very nature of things must develop along climatic lines, and while it may employ a foreign technique, must perforce adapt that technique to native needs. The remarkable "visibility" of American atmosphere was bound to react both upon the American's

conception of landscape beauty and upon his method of stating it in paint; and although first the Barbizon School, and later, in a more marked degree, Manet and the luminists, gave American artists their methods, the use to which those methods were put was American, not French. Broadly speaking, after the first "photographic" phase of the Hudson River School was over, the whole tendency of American landscape painting is definitely romantic, and highly selective. It is as though the unrelenting prolixity and bewildering detail of their raw material forced them, in self-defence, to specialize in some narrow aspect peculiarly sympathetic to themselves: and though it is of course possible to trace resemblances of method between American and French landscapists, we cannot group the Americans, as we can the French, under the headings of technical processes, but only under those of emotional outlook.

Thus, while we may associate Ranger and Blakelock as having some technical relation to the Barbizon School, and Twachtman and Childe Hassam as followers of luminism, these are mere labels. Blakelock and Twachtman are as far apart, technically, as Monticelli and Monet, but in sentiment, in their passionately intimate approach to nature, they are alike. Ranger and Childe Hassam have nothing in common as painters, but in their enjoyment of pattern and light, and their subordination of both to a quiet emotionalism, they are closely akin. In fact, it is at this point in the development of American painting that mere comparison with European prototypes begins to be definitely misleading, and it became steadily more so from now onwards. Though it would be safe to say that neither up to this time nor since has any American painter, working in America, originated a new theory of vision or of painting, from now on they will be found to be putting to their own uses the various European movements, experiments and theories with which they come into contact.

Blakelock, for example, has been likened to Monticelli: but while he uses the same dramatically obscure and glittering mosaic of light and shadow, to which the loaded impasto gives an almost jewelled character, this is rather a technical

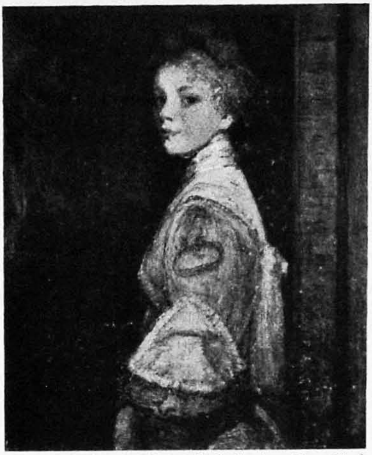
coincidence than the outcome of any similarity of aim, for there is nothing feverish, for all its intensity of feeling, in Blakelock's rendering of sun-dappled woodland, and Indian encampments. His *Ecstasy* (the title was not of his own giving) in the Hackley Gallery, Muskegon, is a good example of the intricacy of design and vigour of statement of which this intensely individual painter is capable. Similarly, Twachtman, for all the delicacy of his intermingled tints, and the skill with which he handles white, and high-keyed scales of colour, is no luminist by profession, only, rather, by preference in choice of subject: and Hassam is as much a decorative designer as a painter of light, as may easily be seen in his landscapes with simple, vertical tree-forms, and a single deftly-placed nude figure.

It would be possible to develop this theme at length, but it is scarcely necessary, for it may be taken for granted in the whole of American painting from this point onwards. The exceptions to the rule—if indeed they be actually exceptions, and not crowning examples of it, are those Americans whose whole painting life was spent abroad. Whistler, as we have seen, not only made original use of borrowed methods, but originated as well. No Frenchman could ever have devised the exact means by which he painted the portrait of his mother, nor his *Battersea Bridge*: and in the same way John Singer Sargent (1856–1924), between his studies with Carolus-Duran and his great career in London, built up, not only his own outlook, but his own technique; for here was a painter in grain, one to whom the brush was the easiest and most natural means of self-expression. It does not matter that from his studies in Paris he learnt the mastery of his tools, nor that through his reverent yet intimate contact with the works of Velazquez, he penetrated deeply into the secret of direct and unfaltering vision and of its transference to canvas; what does matter is that to all that he learned he added, not only his own point of view, but actual developments and modifications of handling which were the natural (and seem the inevitable) outcome of that point of view and its needs. In fact, Whistler and he are the two truly inventive American

painters: and strangely enough, when Sargent did paint in America, his inventiveness to a great extent effaced itself, as in his great decorative designs at Boston.

Whistler cannot be, and is not, claimed either by France or England, and yet finds no place in the logical sequence of American painting; Sargent, though he borrowed as boldly from 18th-century England as from 19th-century France, belongs to neither, and holds his own with both; but because he comes later in the story, he is not so absolutely apart from his American contemporaries as Whistler was from his: but paradoxically, if we place him beside such of his younger contemporaries as Gari Melchers and Robert Henri and George Luks, he is really more American than any of them in their earlier phases.

His earliest work in Paris is marked by an economy of method which is positively startling, when it is placed beside the skilful technical fireworks of Carolus-Duran. Sargent never failed to suggest, either then or later, that everything to which he put his hand was a "job-of-work" with its own definite aim, its isolated intention; that the demonstration of an aesthetic principle, or the evolution of a technical theory, was no business of his, but this one picture, for the time being, was the one thing that mattered. Naturally, he developed an individual technique, recognizable at a glance, but it was so much his own that he could adapt it at will to the needs of any kind of work; and since he combined in himself a technical sureness and stability comparable to that of Velazquez, and a swiftness of reaction to the personality of his subject like that of Reynolds, and a sense of rhythmical design all his own and more powerful than both, he gained in England the reputation of a cynical penetration which he would have been the first to disclaim. Put his portrait of Mrs. Agnew (1903) (National Gallery of Scotland) beside that of Ascher Wertheimer (1898) (Tate Gallery), and the billowy lightness of the Lady Elcho, Mrs. Adeane and Mrs. Tennant (1900) beside the formal dignity of the *Misses Wertheimer* (1898) (Tate Gallery), and it becomes possible to realize that Sargent's enemy was not malice or cynicism, but an incompatability between his sense of



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J. ALDEN WEIR
Japanese Screen

By courtesy Messrs. Knoedler

WILLIAM M. CHASE
Master Roland Chase

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ALBERT P. RYDER
Macbeth and the Witches

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Moonlight

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JOHN H. TWACHTMAN
Niagara

beauty and of character; sometimes, in consequence, his subjects are made the vehicle of more beauty than they can conveniently carry.

However that may be, this occasional incongruity made London rather afraid of being painted by him, for a time, and a new Sargent suddenly arose, a water-colourist of power and originality, and the marvellous blue drawings that he brought back from a North African tour, to the New English Art Club, made those who regarded him as set in the groove of portrait-painting rub their eyes. Then came the Sargent of the small oil landscapes, intricate arabesques of sunlit forest and transparent blue shadow—pure pigment in broad latticed strokes that emerged into vigorous realism—the *Master and his Pupils* (Boston Museum) exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1914 was among the first of these, and the Tyrolean paintings followed soon after; then, back to portraiture, with a bolder impasto yet a more mellowed colour sense, more reminiscent than ever of the best of Reynolds, yet more individual than ever—the portrait of Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth (Sir Philip Sassoon) is a notable example—and last of all, the lovely portrait of Lady Rocksavage (Sir Philip Sassoon), that was hung in the same Royal Academy as the almost equally brilliant rendering of the same subject by Charles Sims. In that last phase of Sargent's work, some of the slashing confidence of brush-work was gone, but its place was more than taken by the rich quietude of colour, the chastened splendour of a point of view at last perfectly balanced as between the subjective and the objective aspects of his work. In intention, Sargent was always consciously objective; it was his subconscious response to the subjective appeal (or otherwise) of his subject which had sometimes imported into his work an element of discord: and his experience of landscape painting, and of the swift and responsive medium of water-colour, was precisely what he needed to help him to discover that, after all, the individuality of the artist must dominate that of the subject, if harmony is to be achieved. And so his last portrait, that of Lady Rocksavage, while it is at first sight just a portrait of a lovely woman, is yet primarily the reflection of a

mellowed Sargent, whose large dignity no longer needs the assertive expression of big flowing lines, whose sense of design is expressed, not in emphatically stated expanses of balanced colour, but quiet vertical lines and subdued notes of colour half immersed in shadow.

Gari Melchers, if we pass over his early phase of genre painting (attractive enough in itself, but characteristic of the student rather than of the man), is, in the technical aspect, rather a keen and selective observer, adapting the craft of Holland—and of France—to the needs of America, than an originator of his own means: but his is from a very early period in his development a crisp, and often keenly sympathetic, realization of the pictorial quality of his subject. Although the *Fencing Master* (Detroit Museum) suggests Manet, the suggestion arises from an atmosphere rather than a real resemblance, and the picture is the reflection of Melchers' own personality, turning a theme which ought to reek of the studio into a vividly interesting self-revelation. Still more, the delightfully sympathetic *Portrait of Mrs. Melchers* in the same gallery, for all its apparent formality, is a spontaneous, almost humorous *tour de force*. It ought to be just a brilliant exercise in method, but it refuses to be just that. It is a woman first, and a vigorous piece of paint-mastery only because it was worth while to the painter that it should be. It may be that Melchers' Dutch training and his apprenticeship in subjects nearer to Josef Israels than to any of the contemporary French painters, have something to do with his readiness of response to the human aspect; and what looks like Manet, in his work, may after all be Hals. There is not such an immense difference really. In any case, Melchers has never looked back, and whether his sources of method be Dutch or French his outlook and character as a painter are wholly American, despite long absence from America.

The recent death of Robert Henri (1865–1929) deprived America of a painter, not only of the first rank, but of extraordinary educational value to his country; for here was a man who, in his wide student-travels, especially in France and Spain, had been able to grasp the essential principles

underlying the beauty of paint as paint, and to apply them with that large carelessness of their origin which comes to the very borderline of genius, and, at moments, crosses it. Less even in his development than Melchers, he varies far more both in sentiment and execution, and a personal preference may cause one to regret that he did not pursue further the course so strikingly begun by his *Lady in Black*, painted in 1905. It is easy to see, in this work, how he must have revelled in such a picture as Velazquez' portrait of Martiñez Montanes, although there is no suggestion of a Velazquez pastiche about it. It has the same reticence, the same economical completeness, the same perfect placing of the high lights; and though its feminine appeal is no small part of its beauty, it is finally as a painting rather than as a picture of a woman that it will continue to hold its own among pictures of the first importance. Another but simultaneous aspect of his Spanish phase, if we may call it so, is provided by his dancing-girl subjects, which show a tendency towards the more emphatic arrangement of masses characteristic of his latest work; but despite some sacrifice of subtlety, they retain, even in so strong a picture as the *Spanish Dancer with Castanets*, a restraint in colour, an obedience to atmospheric unity, which are the prerogative of a painter to whom visual truth, strictly rendered in terms of paint, is the one overmastering aim. Like Velazquez, too, he stands outside his human subjects. His sympathy with them is quite incurious. In a picture like the *Blind Spanish Singer*, it is this observant detachment which, as in Velazquez' *Niño de Vallecas*, robs the subject of its extrinsic and subjective pathos, and insists only upon its intrinsic and objective beauty: and in the Indian and Irish portraits that he painted towards the end of his life, he reaches perhaps a higher point than any other American painter in the complete and dispassionate mastery of pigment. The *Guide to Croaghan*, merely as a piece of painting, is indescribable save in terms that would seem extravagant away from the picture itself, and, in its presence, superfluous. As a portrait of an old Irishman, simple and direct to the point of commonplace, it is life itself, without

comment—nothing extenuate and nought set down in malice.

Midway between Melchers and Henri, and with something of the vivid interest in life for its own sake of Eakins, George Luks fills an important place in the development of a genuinely American impressionism both in portraiture and genre, that owes little to Europe. Albert Sterner, who was born in 1863, deserted commerce for art at the age of sixteen, and began his career as an illustrator in *Harpers* and *St. Nicholas*. Jullian's School, and Gérôme, gave him his Paris training, which, however, he has turned to his own broad and vigorous account. As a lithographer he has as fine a command of line and mass as in paint, and his figure-drawing, especially of the nude, is rich and full of fine rhythm. Glackens also, and Bellows, whose recent death cut short a career that had just embarked upon a new development of the greatest promise, have contributed greatly to the growing independence of America, while Jonas Lie, though owing much indirectly to Monet, has set his own stamp upon the painting of reflected light and moving water, and has a remarkable sense of atmospheric unity combined, rather unusually, with emphatic compositional balance. It was men like this who did more than has yet been realized to give American art its charter of freedom to develop nationally.

It was, however, a man of different stamp, Arthur B. Davies (1862–1928), who gave the first bold lead to America in what may be called the research movement towards modernism. To those to whom his name recalls the dream-like placidity of his *Unicorns*, with its decorative largeness of design, and the faint echo, in its cool colour and quiet little figures, of the early Umbrians, such a painter would seem the last person in the world to be the missionary of cubism and of the various experimental phases that began to exercise the world in the second decade of this century. Still less would his earlier work, with its pastoral sentiment and rather timid technique, suggest any such development, and in his last phase of all, represented by such a picture as *Without Pause, Enters, Touches, Passes*

London, Tate Gallery

J. S. SARGENT

Carnation Lily, Lily Rose

DHAN... ALIAR
LIBRARY

(Worcester Art Museum), it is only in the light of our knowledge of his enthusiasm for and earnest study of the later developments of contemporary European art, that we can trace their influence. Strangely enough, it is rather Burne-Jones than Picasso that this latest group of works suggests.

But Davies had in him a strong streak of mysticism, which found incomplete and unsatisfactory expression in the archaizing tendencies which were for a long time his only means of bringing into his work that atmosphere of other-worldliness in which his imagination lived. His struggles to express that imaginative inner life took various forms, one of which is seen in the strange but not incongruous medley of modern and fantastic costume of *From Green Coverts*, and another in the arbitrary but beautiful intrusion of nude figures into the wide and peaceful landscape of *Illimitable Dawn*. And when, in 1913, he organized the memorable exhibition of Post-Impressionist, Futurist and Cubist works at the Armory in New York, he showed to all the world how strongly his mind had been working in the direction of new media of expression for that mystical side of his character, and for a time his own work fell into line with, while never quite mastering, the principles of cubism.

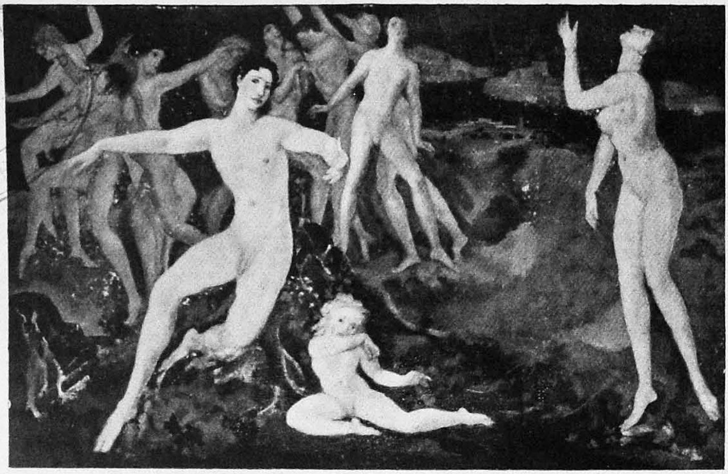
In the Bliss music-room decorations, the fullest play is given to his experimental phase; yet even here there is no real attempt to probe to the theoretic basis of cubism; the decorative instinct is too strong to allow any theory to take charge, to the detriment of the primary aim of the work, which was that of beautifying a room. Davis did not make the mistake of turning his space into a demonstrator's black-board; and though his study of contemporary European art movements was not superficial, his use of their lessons was eclectic. The result is seen in his very latest drawings, in more analytical drawing and more compact construction of his figure designs. Perhaps his nearest affinity in English painting is William Blake; for in both men the mystic element finds expression through a delicately sensuous appreciation of form and line.

The firstfruits of the Armory exhibition was George

Bellows (1882–1929), already a vigorous naturalistic painter and a lithographer of convincing power. His fine sense of expressive design, as seen, for example, in the lithograph *The Stag at Sharkey's*, was cramped within the limits of literal representation, and though the locked figures of the combatants stand out with an architectural balance against the shadowy background and the dimly seen faces around the ring, one cannot help feeling, as he felt, the need for a greater simplicity and directness of statement to bring home the full force of the artist's instantaneous grasp of the design. Bellows found in Cézanne, and in the Futurist and Cubist examples in the Armory exhibition, precisely what he needed to supplement his study of Velazquez, El Greco and Manet. For in the modern statements of the analysed processes of construction and composition, he learned to understand principles of which he had hitherto seen only the results, and so was enabled to put them to personal and independent use: and though he thus realized, and used consciously, the geometric basis of design which had before been only his subconscious guide, he never allowed it to become an obsession. His natural tendency to rather livid colour, which had no doubt been intensified by his admiration for El Greco, now gave way to a purer and bolder palette, as in *Picnic*, where the mountains are rendered in almost unbroken cobalt: but in the very interesting *White Horse* in the Worcester (Mass.) Art Museum, it is possible to understand how greatly Bellows' interest in ordinary things and in natural aspects of landscape helped him to use, rather than to be used by, the newly acquired understanding of the craft of picture-making as a means of direct self-expression. Even the rather wooden composition of his *Gramercy Park* (Independents, New York, 1923) cannot disguise the fine unity of the pervading light, nor the solidity and strength of the components of the design. He cannot be labelled by the name of any movement or creed, but by reason of his very simplicity and honesty, was able to teach a large section of public opinion to respect and to admire a more personal element in painting than they had ever tolerated in one of their own artists before.

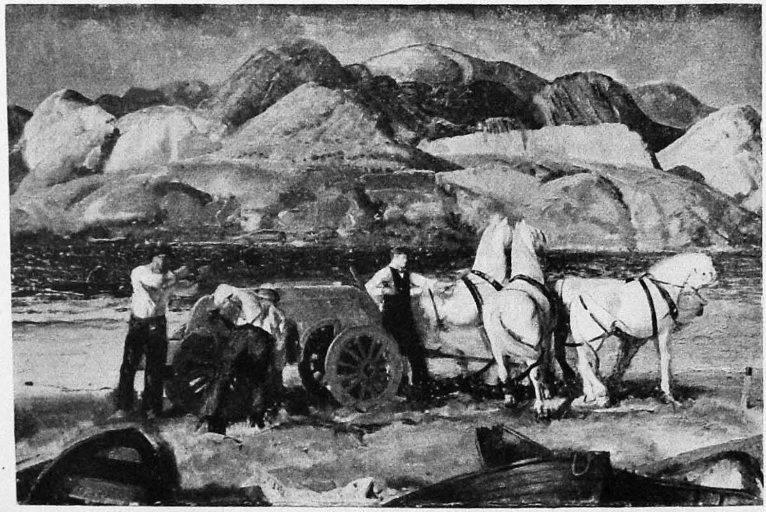
With Robert Henri, Arthur B. Davies and George Bellows, modern American painting comes definitely into being; these are the men of only yesterday, almost of to-day, yet it is only within the last twenty years or even less that any kind of " modernism " has established itself in America; and even now there are as many exponents of the purely representative traditions of the 19th century, as of the more personal (perhaps more egotistical) art of to-day. Among artists of the older tradition, Tryon, with his moonlit landscapes, Horatio Walker, who has found a France almost that of J. F. Millet in French Canada, but touched it with a less melancholy note of his own, Remington, the uncompromisingly literal illustrator of Western life, Albert L. Groll, vigorous interpreter of sand and skies and wind-stunted, tortured trees in Arizona and Nevada and New Mexico; Millet, the story-teller, of the heritage of C. R. Leslie, each holds his own in one way or another, without greatly advancing the history of painting in America. Among portrait-painters the older school still holds almost undisputed sway. In the work of Alexander, or Wiles, of Benson or Reid, the difference from Chase, or even from Sargent, is rather one of degree than of kind. Munich and Paris are still strong, and the flood of visiting portrait-makers from Europe have all been of a type to perpetuate the tradition. The portrait-painters of to-day, fashion in dress apart, are not so modern as Henri's *Lady in Black* of a quarter of a century ago. Cecilia Beaux, Louis Betts, Charles Hopkinson and Abram Poole are good painters, whom we may place beside Oswald Birley, Gerald Kelly and Frank Salisbury rather than beside Sickert or John or Steer. F. C. Frieseke is in rather a different category, for he has made his own use of his Paris training among the painters of light, and his nudes, with their clear lighting, and firm though delicate modelling, are of a very high order of art. Of the older living painters, George de Forest Brush occupies a fine eminence, with a severity of line, a cleanliness of colour and an austere beauty of character, which raise him clear of any ruck of commonplace dependence upon either the natural graces of his subject, the conventional graces of

DHANAKOTI MUDA
LIBRA



By courtesy Ferargil Galleries, New York

A. B. DAVIES
Into the Moving Night



By courtesy Frank K. M. Rehn Gallery, New York

GEORGE BELLOWS
The Sand Team

In America now, as elsewhere, still-life is the widest field of experiment, and the name of still-life painters is legion; and it is in this experimental phase of American painting that we are faced with the singularly repetitive scope of modern investigation. For here American painters are finding out for themselves, rather than learning from others. There can be no implication of mere echoing of European models, for though the work of Morris Kantor, Preston Dickinson, Max Weber, A. S. Baylinson and a hundred others, has been done before by Van Gogh and Cézanne and Roger Fry and the rest, yet these American painters attack the old problems in their own way and of their own initiative, and arrive at their own results. In the field of urbanized landscape, which is new all over the world, since it is the outcome of new conditions, of a generation of painters so constantly confronted by masses of bricks and mortar and steel, that they are obliged to find out the beauty of them, or perish of ugliness, America more than holds her own. We need not be reminded of Ginner or Cundall, Algernon Newton or Spencer Gore or Holmes, to grasp the significance of Peter Helck's sensitive skill in discovering the beauty of mass and line in *66th Street Elevated Station*, or the frankly optimistic message of Robert Spencer, with his rosy sunshine upon tawdry tenements, with more than a hint of the luminism of half a century back turned to modern account; or yet again the many renderings of chimney-stacks and railway lines which have, quite naturally, inspired so many of the younger painters of the Cleveland School. Mrs. J. K. W. Hailman finds fine design and a real landscape bigness in ironworks and railway trucks (*South Duquesne*, in the Pittsburgh International, 1930), and Glenn Coleman's back streets and John Sloan's glimpses of the New York Elevated Railway are as crammed with life as they are austere in composition. This is a genre of painting in which American painters are perhaps peculiarly equipped to arrive at an outstanding position, and it seems as though they were in a fair way to do it rather upon the lines of Cézanne or Gilbert Spencer, than of Canaletto or—at the other end of the story—Lurçat!

To be sure, there have been, and still are, many experimentalists in the passing modes; but they neither seem to feel, nor do they carry, much conviction as to the value of the principles of cubism or of futurism, or whatever movement to which they attach themselves. Morris Kantor's *Portrait of a Blonde Woman* (Independents, 1923), for instance, is sufficiently astonishing, but it is based on no sure principle, nor does it arrive at discovering a new one. In fact, so far as an observer at a distance can arrive at a conclusion, American examples of the phases of experiment which began in Europe shortly before the War, are derivative exercises rather than true experiments; and it is very interesting to observe how quick the American artist is to borrow the trappings of a theory, and to throw the theory itself overboard. Again and again we come across echoes of "isms" in American painting of the simplest representational type, as in Edward Bruce's Italian landscapes, so carefully massed in patterns of solid geometry that cubism flashes into the memory—and out again. In Guy Pène du Bois, with his crowded figures in the subway or on the race-course, we permit ourselves for a moment to see the influence of Metzinger, or of Picasso's "monumental" phase, and lose it again, in the literal, human vitality of the everyday scenes that he paints. It is the right spirit: it seems to show that the artist in America sees these various experiments of process (which their discoverers and their devotees at close quarters are betrayed by enthusiasm for their own product into regarding as results) from a distance, and consequently as what they really are; namely, as aids to self-expression, to be used as personally and with as little regard for their sanctity as principles, as one uses brushes, oil and pigment, all of which were once experiments and discoveries. Perhaps something is lost thereby of the pure fire of creation, but on the other hand a great deal is saved of struggle and searching of heart, and the American artist gets quick results where Picasso spends a lifetime in research, only very rarely allowing himself the luxury of sharing his so hardly won knowledge with the world in the form of a picture. For instance, what force and meaning Peter Blume can put into the strident clatter

of his symbolic *Parade*, what verve and variety there are in the mural decorations of Thomas Benton, at the New York School for Social Research, with their interwoven scenes of action. These have no principle in common with any European sequence of experiments, but they have borrowed freely from them all, without acknowledgment!

As this outline begins to draw towards its close, its faults of omission begin to crowd upon the writer ominously; but since it has been computed that there are in America a million and a half of practising painters, and that the average aggregate of their yearly earnings is about a million dollars all told, he may perhaps be forgiven for having left some of them out. There are, however, two names without which any account of modern American painting would be as Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark: for they seem to me to epitomize, between them, the whole of that mixture of insatiable curiosity, unflinching realism, uncurbed idealism, and circumscribed practicality, of rather brutal frankness and rather puritanical periphrasis, of headlong haste and cautious conservatism, which the foreign, and possibly ill-informed observer sees, or think he sees, in modern America. These names are those of Walt Kuhn and Georgia O'Keeffe. Only America could have produced them, though any nation of painters might be glad to have done so, for what they represent as much as for what they do.

Walt Kuhn has been compared to Cézanne. The comparison is a waste of time. Cézanne was a patient, unassuming student, with research punctuated by despair for his life-history. Walt Kuhn has no inferiority complex, no doubts, no hesitations. His circus-world of clowns and show-girls shrieks colour at you, hits you between the eyes with personality, sullen or questioning, defiant or pathetic or wholly withdrawn within the impenetrable mask of indifference. His palette is raw, his drawing coarse but never slipshod, his keynote strident; but he arrives. His *White Clown* tells nothing of its subject but its stupendous mass, its rather terrifying possibilities of action; but the handling of white is superb in its blatant confidence. His *Girl in a Shako* is harsh and uncompromising but with a queer

undernote of pathos. His *Show Girl* is an insolence in colour, in character, and in design—even in drawing,—but there is no getting away from its commanding quality as a picture and as a technical achievement. These pictures have the glare and the din of a whole city in the compass of their narrow range of subject.

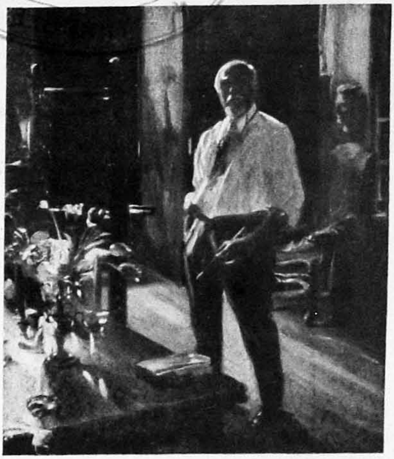
Georgia O'Keeffe is not a modernist but a modern. Her flower paintings are not imitations of flowers, nor even the memory of flowers, as were the roses of Fantin Latour. They are not the confinement of flowers within the shackles of a theory, like those of cubist experiment; they are the immortalization of flowers by their expansion into a formal blooming of pure design. Whether in *White Flower*, where the delicate play of light and shade in the radiating wrinkles of a translucent white petal is the sole source of pattern, carried beyond the rectangular limits of the frame; or in *Jack in the Pulpit No. 2*, where the leaves are brought into play to break up the background of the bizarre stripings of the upright flower, the decorative sense is so absolutely predominant as to make one feel that she has discovered the real reason for the creation of the flower itself and has crystallized and set it down. And, working among the painters who have made their "Barbizon" in Taos, New Mexico, she has applied to the sand-dunes, with their monotonously infinite variety, and to the forest trees, towering to the stars, this same uncanny power of control, which turns them into almost monochrome designs that only a very superficial criticism would set down as merely decorative in intent: for in this mountain atmosphere the mystical aspect of her motive becomes apparent. It is not merely a clever handling of foliage and tree-trunks, but a suggestive, arresting angle of vision, as much spiritual as material, that presents itself in the *Lawrence Pine Tree, with Stars*. It is only gradually that this remarkable painting, with its immensity of height and penetrating luminosity, reveals itself fully; but once it has done so, there is an awe-inspiring quality in it which fixes it indelibly in the memory. Miss O'Keeffe is, in this aspect of her work, an artist to be ranked among the discoverers of a new world.

DHANAKOTI MUDALIAR

By courtesy Macbeth Gallery, New York

ROBERT HENRI

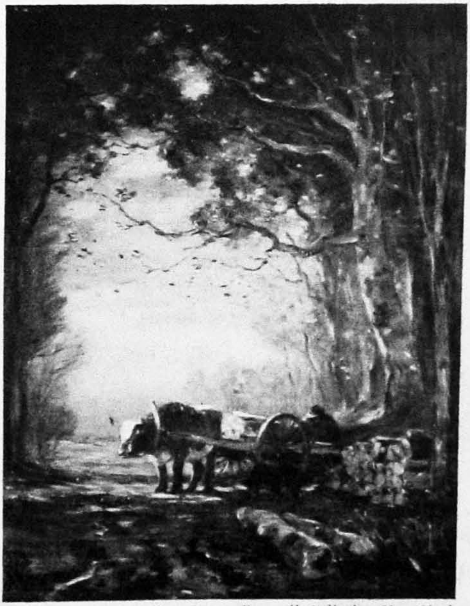
Man of Segovia



By courtesy Ferargil Galleries, New York

ALBERT STERNER

Self-portrait



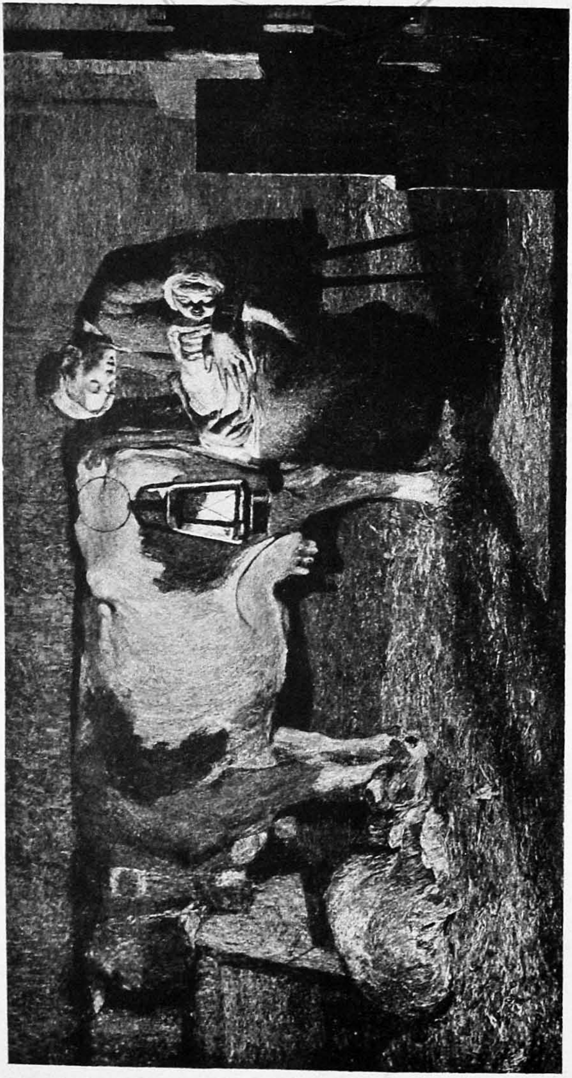
By courtesy Ferargil Galleries, New York

HORATIO WALKER

Autumn

Plate 56

DHANAKOTI MUDALIAR



Ph. Anderson

GIOVANNI SEGANTINI
The Two Mothers

For American art is at the opening of a new era. Almost till now, it was scarcely more than an extension of the geographical area of European art; but now it has begun to make its own discoveries, in its own country, so that it becomes daily more necessary, and more difficult, for the European student of art history to follow its developments. The very inadequacy of this chapter will be enough to show how pressing is the need: for in the multitude of painters, in the immense variety of climate, racial tradition and tendency, and social and physical surroundings, it is inevitable that schools of painting should arise as subtly diverse and as intricate in their interplay, as the schools of mediæval Italy, and perhaps some day of an equal formative influence upon the destinies of civilized art.

CHAPTER V

THE ITALIAN SCHOOL

IT was not until after the Risorgimento of 1848 that Italian artists made the first move towards throwing off the domination of French and native neo-classicism; and it was natural that the first stirrings should come in northern Italy, where the spirit of the new nationalism had been most forcibly evoked by political events; but the classicism of Hayez (1791–1882), despite its Venetian flavour, and the rather frigid romanticism of his pupil, Domenico Induno (1815–1878), were too deeply tinged by the tradition of David and Ingres to give to the school of Milan a truly Italian character, and though Sebastiano de Albertis (1828–1897) was the declared battle painter of the Risorgimento, there was too strong a flavour of Vernet in his work to give him a place among the creators of a national Italian style. Emilio Gola (*b.* 1852), who was the pupil of de Albertis, developed in the direction of that suave facility which has always been characteristic of the Milanese School; and this has been carried to a very high pitch of polished accomplishment in the present day by Giuseppe Amisani, who did not find himself until Milan had given him the technical command both of the high-keyed range of colour and the sureness of handling which are the outstanding features of its academic tradition.

But, although Milan was destined to produce the Italian painter Giovanni Segantini, who stands out conspicuously as an innovator and discoverer, of purely personal genius and international significance, it was in Tuscany, rather than in Lombardy, that Italian nationalism in painting first asserted itself: for it was here that about 1850 the " Macchiaiuoli " (the " Spot-men ") made the first concerted and considered steps towards a new naturalism. This group was not wholly composed of Tuscan artists, for its ranks were strengthened by young painters from Venetia and Lombardy, driven south by political conditions; and thus it may be said that the group was really representative of the artistic aspirations of new-born Italy as a whole.

In 1855 Serafino de Tivoli, who had been one of

Garibaldi's redshirts, returned to Florence from Paris, a keen student still in his twenties, bringing with him the lessons that he had learned from the uncompromising realism of Courbet, and from the triumph of Rousseau. It is interesting to note that the collective outlook of the Macchiaiuoli was not unlike that of the Barbizon painters, in that they made it an article of faith to go straight to nature, and to use landscape as a means of temperamental expression ; but the essential difference lies in the fact that all of them, to judge from their work, based themselves ultimately on the decorative element in their subject, and so attached more importance to patterned arrangement, and to balanced placing of strong colour notes, than had appeared either necessary or desirable to the French landscapists. Moreover, their themes are far more varied, and in the Florentine art of this period we encounter occasionally a startling note of modernity, as in Giovanni Boldini's portrait of Giovanni Fattori in his studio (1845), with its direct and summary statement of forms, and its rendering of interior space and light, almost anticipatory of Manet, or in Vincenzo Cabianca's *Seashore at Serravezza* (1861) with its telling contrasts of extreme light and dark, and of horizontal and vertical elements of design. Silvestro Lega's rickyards and farm scenes, with their severe quietude of line, and simplified colour masses, bring us right down to the neo-realism of to-day, and if a room were filled with the work of this group, we should be left wondering that a generation of painters in Florence should have come so near to the borders of modern painting without embarking upon a continuous progress which would have carried them far ahead of France in the solution of the problems of impressionism.

Indeed, the question, why Giovanni Fattori (*b.* 1828), who was among the first builders upon the foundations laid by the Macchiaiuoli, has not the international fame of a Courbet, a Manet, or a Gauguin, is hard to answer. Let it be granted that he has incurred the fatal label of a battle painter and a painter of genre; that in some of his work, as for example the *Contadine Livornese*, he allows a touch of sentimentality to invade the decorative severity of his

design; none the less, in his open-air figure subjects, such as the *Signore nel Bosco*, brilliance of selection, mastery of pattern, and forcible breadth of method, make his work at once commanding in its finality and intimate in its appeal. The inspired spacing of flat colour in the group of crinolined figures, ranged against the panoramic background of sea and sky in *La Rotonda di Palmieri* (Pitti, Florence), falls nothing short of genius, and in his *Agguato*, with its dramatic harmony of design between the figures of the soldiers and their landscape setting, he has nothing to learn from Manet. Fattori should stand side by side with Segantini, as an Italian painter whose power came from within, and whose work was a real contribution to European art.

It may be, however, that while the strongly entrenched academicism of Florence, with which Fattori had to contend, served to confine his influence within very narrow limits, the greater susceptibility of Milan to new influences enabled Giovanni Segantini (1858–1899) to produce an impression in proportion to his worth, not only in Milan itself, but throughout and beyond Italy; for Milanese artists were both geographically and traditionally in close touch with the outside world, and though Segantini never left Italy, and indeed spent most of his brief painting life in remote Alpine villages, his work, even in his lifetime, became known to his European contemporaries, and he was actually at work on a picture for the Paris Salon when his premature death occurred.

It was into the Brera Academy of the last days of a dying classicism that this waif of the streets came to learn the practice of the art that was born in him. Here, he was able to study at first hand, not the classic formulæ of the Napoleonic tradition, but the work of almost contemporary Paris, for there was no rigid conservatism to stand between him and the most modern developments of the foreign schools. At the age of nineteen he had exhibited his first oil-painting, and his pictures were soon winning success in exhibitions in Amsterdam, Dresden and Berlin. His range was wide, from religious subjects, in which he went back for his inspiration to the mediæval painters of his own country,

to landscapes in which the realistic rendering of light in all the phases of the day was the dominating theme. In his peasant subjects, he reveals the same first-hand knowledge of toil and poverty that gave Millet his commanding power, and his Alpine pictures, while never straying from a simple realism, convey an impression of personal sentiment that removes them far from mere literal representation. Segantini was neither an impressionist as Degas or Manet was an impressionist, nor a realist as Courbet was a realist. Technically, his work is more tentative and experimental, more capable of diversity, than that of any contemporary Frenchman. In spirit, it is intensely sensitive to the sentiment of the moment, sometimes even emotional, and at other times the whole of its interest seems concentrated upon the objective aspect of its subject; but that it is a personal record, owing little in either its conception or its method to external sources, cannot be denied. He has been called the pioneer of "divisionism" in Italy, but it is hard to believe that he regarded the use of broken colour as in any sense a gospel or solution of all problems. His latest work, in which the high key of snowy landscape, and the luminosity of open skies, presented the problem of the rendering of light in an accentuated form, does indeed show a highly developed use of separated points of colour, but there are whole passages in these same works which ignore the method altogether. Segantini was a painter rather than a doctrinaire, who used all means that came to his hand. In the same way Antonio Mancini (1852–1930), from childhood onwards, was a natural painter; and from the purely academic instruction which he received at Naples he evolved a remarkable and wholly personal form of impressionism, ranging from the broad and delicate touch of the *Rosina* of 1870, to the loaded impasto and heavy tone of the *Portrait of the Artist's father*, at Leeds, and, later still, to the brilliant colour and fantastic technique of the *Portrait of a boy in a kilt*, in the Wilson Collection at the same gallery. His eccentricities, such as the use of fragments of paint-tubes imbedded in the pigment, to give high lights, and the piling of paint in masses sometimes an inch thick, have to some extent diverted attention

from his exquisitely sensitive rendering of light, which is seen at its very best in the *Portrait of Sir Hugh Lane*, at Dublin. It is interesting to note that he had a passionate admiration for the work of Reynolds, but a very poor opinion of Sargent, to whom, in fact, he owed much; and that, although it is as a master of light and colour that his appeal is most obvious, he had a profound respect for, and a fine command of, pure drawing.

In the later developments of impressionism in Italy, however, an impressionist school has grown up, which owes less to Segantini than to French influence. The works of Emma Ciardi, more especially her glittering Venetian scenes, and those of Italico Brass, with their fine decorative balance and vigorous movement, do attach themselves definitely to such an impressionism, and in figure painting Giovanni Romagnoli and Riccardo Galli, in very different ways, achieve a rendering of light, and of solid form, that cannot be called by any other name; even such a purely Florentine painter as Armando Spadini (1882–1925), in his beautifully composed nude subjects, with their elaborate structure, rather suggests the glimpse of form through light than form itself; and in the Milanese painter, Aldo Carpi (*b.* 1886), we have one who, though as a colourist he shows the influence of the earlier impressionists, comes out definitely on the side of a vigorous neo-realism, not untouched by the researches of Cézanne into the rendering of solid form. Though in *The White House* colour and pattern seem at first to predominate we arrive eventually at a spatial depth which transforms the pattern into one of three dimensions, and in his striking portrait of an *Old Gentleman*, the skilful disposition of the folds of the coat, and the accentuation of vertical and horizontal lines in the background accessories, give, without the smallest departure from objective truth, an immensely vigorous impression of solidity. Carpi, again, is a Milanese, and one might be tempted into believing that the School of Milan was especially favourable to the development of individuality in its pupils, if one were not confronted with the monotonous, though undeniably charming, facility of some of its most

distinguished portrait painters, and on the other hand, by the vigorous and uncompromising individuality of Florentines like Giannino Marchig, with his firm modelling, aggressive design, and emphatic opposition of light and dark.

The fact is, that while here and there we may find, among Italians, painters to whom the problems of light and the rendering of swiftly seen impression are a source of inspiration, for the most part the Italian is more concerned with the decorative and plastic sides of painting. Among the younger men, drawing, whether by means of broad and clearly defined masses of colour, or of emphasis upon the element of line, takes the foremost place. With Alessandro Pomi, for example, a row of people in a waiting-room becomes an absorbing theme for the rendering of form, costume and attitude, not in the least because of its anecdotal interest, but by reason of the opportunity it affords for developing the underlying decorative possibilities of commonplace people in a bold design of light and shade. Primo Conti, with more emphasis upon line, and more complexity of colour arrangement, makes a monumental design out of a portrait of a Chinese lady. Giuseppe Montanari, with what we might have called, a generation ago, Pre-Raphaelite fidelity of representation, does the same thing with a rather ungainly old fruit-seller seated among her baskets against a blank wall, and his solid rendering of nude forms is equally based upon the decorative aspect of the theme; and Guido Cadorin, by the use of a setting of heavy colour in almost unbroken mass, can make the very restrained modelling of a head and shoulders and arms the vehicle of a portrait both of startling vitality and quiet decorative effect.

These are painters of to-day, taken almost at random, without reference to locality or school, or to the labels of groups and movements. They differ widely from one another, both in aim and method, yet they have one common characteristic, which they share even with the avowed impressionists of Italy; and that characteristic is a faithful adherence to decorative unity of design. In fact, the inherent virtue of Italian painting is a remarkable instinct

for composition, an instinct which not even the most revolutionary aims can wholly suppress.

Indeed, it may have been an overestimate of the expressive power of design, in the active mind of the Italian, that produced the most remarkable and most far-reaching of the many theories of painting which exercised the early years of this century. There is, after all, one defect, from the point of view of a restless age, in a tradition of impeccable pictorial design. It is inexorably static; it is unalterably still. If it is right, as it almost always is in the work of an Italian, it is final; and finality is in itself depressing to some minds.

When, in France, the cubists proclaimed the painter's power to dispense with all the variable and "accidental" elements of his subject, and to present, as it were, their irreducible minimum of essential content, it seemed as though this very finality were in a fair way to be exalted as a virtue, whereas it was, from the opposite point of view, a crushing and unnecessary limitation: and Italy was not slow to propound the opposite thesis, that since the reaction of the painter to the subject was (admittedly) the proper theme for painting, the living and progressive artist must find the means to express a living and progressive impression; that, in fact, he must use the subject—the "emotive source"—as a starting-point for a series of emotional experiences, not as a full stop to those experiences. So Futurism, in the painting of Boccioni, Balla and Severini, and in the propagandist eloquence of Marinetti, came into being in 1912.

Although an immense amount of ridicule has been heaped upon Futurism, it has undeniably penetrated into the body of modern art, and has widened the scope of its expressive power. The *Centifrugal Force* of Balla is not, it is true, a picture in the ordinary sense of being a recognizable representation of a material object or scene; but it is most emphatically a diagrammatic expression of a state of movement in a clearly defined direction and from a clearly indicated source. The glittering arcs of gold and silver pursuing one another across a background of darkness, do, it is true, constitute a decorative design, pleasing to the eye without

the adventitious aid of any non-aesthetic association; and in so far as they do this, they may rightly be called a "picture": but, in addition to this, they convey an impression of ordered movement, that is to say, they represent a co-ordinated series of successive visual impressions. Centuries before, Leonardo da Vinci, alone among all the artists and scientists of the Renaissance, had experimented with the same range of the representational possibilities of painting, and there is nothing very surprising in the fact that it was again in the 20th century a group of Italians who carried to their logical conclusion the principles of which he had discovered the existence.

Naturally, far more was claimed for Futurism by Marinetti, its chief literary exponent, than it was capable of performing. But Gino Severini was soon able to prove by his kaleidoscopic rendering of interwoven movement of many figures, that it was based as much upon mental as upon visual experience, or rather, that it was a faithful representation of the imperfect synchronization of eye and brain. The eye that looks is always a little at variance with the eye that merely sees; for instance, if one is consciously watching a single moving figure in a moving crowd, that one figure will be repeated on one's conscious visual experience more often and more forcibly than any other; the only other figures which will leave any definite impression on the consciousness will be those which obstruct the view and mutilate the complete outline of the one figure which one consciously desires to see. Thus, in a picture of seeking and following one figure in a crowd, the repetition, more or less fragmentary, of a single figure, and the emphasis upon the fragmentary glimpses of obstructive figures, together with the generalization of subordinate elements of foreground and distance, is nothing more than pure representation of an actual visual experience.

More complicated, but no less logical, is that aspect of Futurism which aims at representing in visual form a series of successive mental reactions to a single visual experience, or even to a single abstract idea. It is here, however, that logical development carries the futurist theory beyond

the normal limits of a common experience, so that it breaks down in practice, although Boccioni got very near to achieving success in this genre.

Futurism, however, made a deeper impression, considered as an all-sufficient theory of art, in France and Germany, than in Italy itself. Among the younger Italian painters, as, for instance, the Pittori Combattanti, and the Novecento Italiano, there is scarcely a trace of its influence. It is not so long ago that Signor Marinetti himself was told, in Milan, that Futurism was dead. On the other hand, Cubism has found many serious Italian students, who have, however, regarded it as they regarded Futurism, as a theory containing a certain element of truth, capable of practical application to painting as a means of enhancing and widening its representative and decorative powers. Even Severini, the most brilliantly convincing of all the Futurists, has been able to appropriate from the Cubists something of their massive vigour, without sacrificing the expression of searching and shifting vision which gave to his purely futuristic work such a lively actuality. The *Balcone à Rocca di Papa*, exhibited at Buenos Aires in 1930, is a brilliant example of the absorption into frankly representational painting of the best elements both of Futurism and Cubism. In the same way, Mario Sironi (*b.* 1885), whose work has the blessing of Boccioni, the most vigorous exponent of abstract Futurism, combines in his bold and impressive portrait studies such as the *Bevitóre* the intellectual and emotional suggestiveness of Boccioni's Futurism, with a sense of mass and power that takes us past Cubism back to Cézanne.

The Italian mind, though it is fruitful of theories, is too well balanced to be enslaved by its own offspring. It is rather among the Italians who have spent much time abroad, such as René Paresce, or Massimo Campigli, that we find the present exponents of the futuristic thesis and the experimentalists in archaistic simplification; others who, like Achille Lega, though at one time close adherents of its tenets, have remained in their own country, have emerged with a simplified and strengthened art, of which quietude and dignity, and severe economy of means are the dominant

characteristics. Such painters as Giorgio Morandi, with his monumentally simple still-life compositions, Piero Marussig and Pompeo Borra, with their splendid figure-modelling and rich design, Mario Tozzi, whose *Bibliophile*, and Antonio Donghi, whose *La Sposa* and *Carnival* lose nothing of severe actuality and lively human interest by reason of their clear-cut drawing and scholarly disposition of masses, are typical of the sanity and freedom from theoretical obsession of modern Italian painting as a whole.

In landscape painting, the conclusion is irrestistible, that the Italian painters have evolved from the study of Cézanne a post-Impressionism of their own which takes no account of the cubist development from the same source in France, but is strongly tinged with the romantic impressionism of painters like Segantini and Fattori. It is rather of Derain and de Segonzac and Martin Paatz that we are reminded by the beautifully balanced and vibrating landscapes of Franco Dani and Raffaele de Grada and Francesco Trombadori; and Cézanne himself leaps to the mind, in the presence of the work of Silvio Pucci and Guido Ferroni. The strong underlying sentiment of all this work, a sentiment comparable to the temperamental response to nature of the Barbizon painters, is working steadily in the direction of a new realism, more national and more nearly referable to purely Italian traditions, than anything that has been produced in modern Italy hitherto. Perhaps Antonio Donghi is to be reckoned, as a figure-painter, in the same group; for this new realism is by no means confined to landscape painting. The young Sienese painter, Memo Vagaggini, in whose work a naïve austerity of landscape design and a lively emotionalism in the rendering of character (as in his *St. Francis*) take us back to mediæval Siena in spirit, and almost in form, is an outstanding example of this Italian renaissance; and Alberto Salietti, Aldo Carpi, and perhaps, above all, Felice Casorati, are modern realists, whose realism is, unconsciously, strongly subjective and wholly Italian, and who are more and more reverting to the quietude and grandeur of the Italian *Quattrocento* both in the means and in the end in view. Now and then an eccentric talent

like that of Giorgio di Chirico puzzles us by its light and almost playful variation of theme and method, and by startling contrasts, such as the austerity of his beautifully designed *Melancholy*, and the fantastic flourish of his *Horses by the Sea*, but, broadly speaking, modern Italian art has arrived at a state of calm and steadfast attachment to a neo-realism which loses nothing of its force and simplicity by reason of its contact with the more vigorous forms of recent experiment.

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A. MANCINI: Trussardi Valpi

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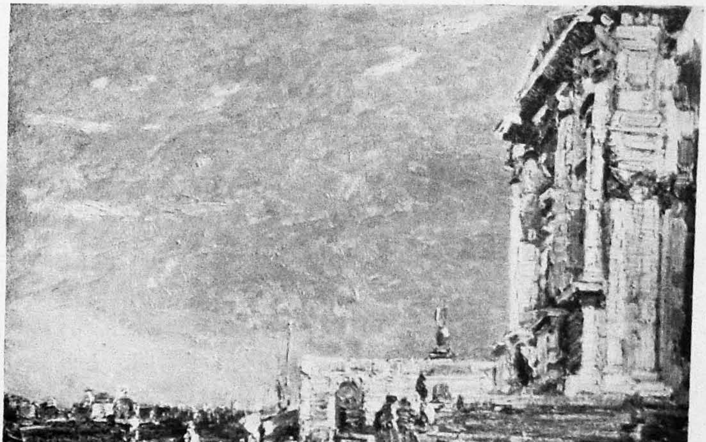

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E. CIARDI: Afternoon Light, Venice

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IGNACIO ZULOAGA: The Balcony

SOROLLA Leonese Peasants

CHAPTER VI

THE SPANISH SCHOOL AND THE LOW COUNTRIES

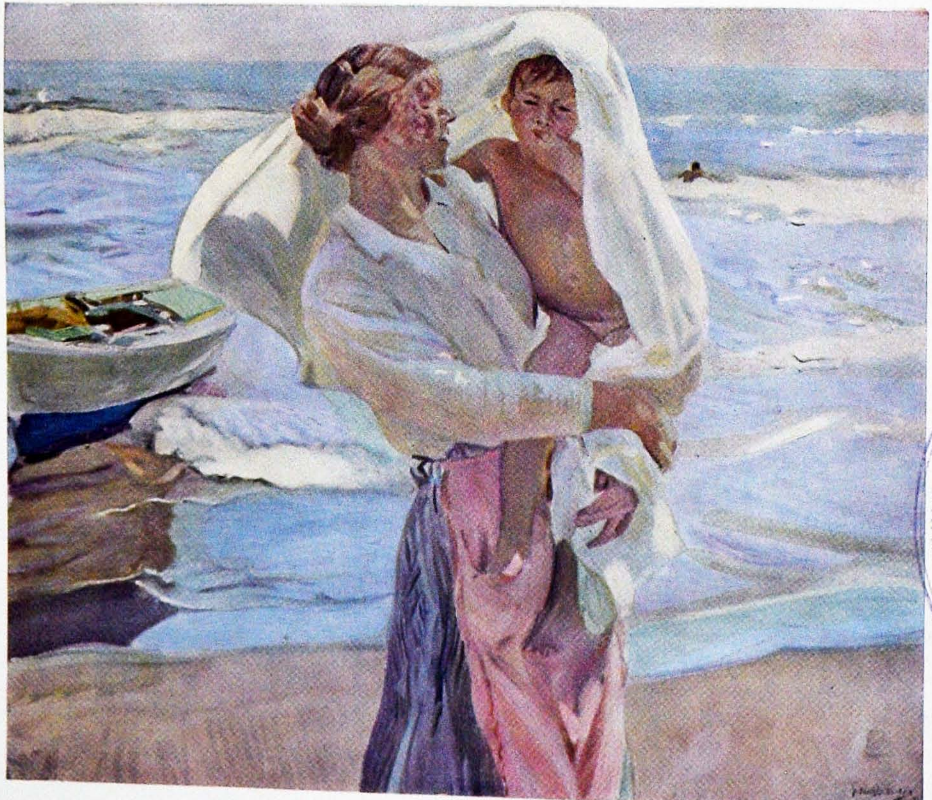
ALTHOUGH Spain has, at wide intervals, contributed notably to the development of European painting, and, in the work of El Greco, Velazquez and Goya, has exercised a tremendous influence outside her own borders during the last hundred years, it is rather by reason of sturdy independence of all experimental and theoretical phases and by imperviousness to foreign fashions that she has developed her own art. Moreover, there has never been in Spain any tendency to depart from frankly representational and narrative painting, with the result that, while much of the work of the Spanish painters of historical and dramatic subject-pictures is now out of fashion, it is marked by a consistent, if comparatively unambitious excellence in composition, colour, and narrative directness. It is true that we may seek in vain for either the savage cynicism or the terrible drama of Goya, in any of his successors. The romantic spirit was too strong in, for example, José Casado del Alisal, to allow him to give even to so macabre a subject as the *Bell of Huesca* its full force of horror, and he has invested it with all the dramatic dignity that balanced composition and carefully studied and restrained emotional expression can give it. It is a strange thing that the painters of a nation so realistic, so uncompromising in their attachment to visual fact, as the Spaniards, should have developed to a higher point of dramatic suavity than any other people the polite art of history-painting. It seems as though the influence of Raphael Mengs had actually imposed upon the native painters such strong fetters of artificiality, that they had almost forgotten their freedom : and that Goya burst through these bonds is evidence rather of his own turbulent nature than of any national reassertion of independence; yet, although in the early years of the 19th century the classicism of Paris succeeded that of Mengs as the orthodox rule in Spanish art, it had no strong hold, and when Eduardo Rosales (1837–1873) sought to enlarge his experience after his training in Madrid, it was to Siena and Rome, not to Paris, that he

turned, seeking at first hand, as Velazquez had sought it, the secret of endowing the visual actuality of life with the permanence of monumental design.

Rosales reminds one, in his capacity for expressing space and mass in direct painting, of the later Velazquez, after the second visit to Italy. It is unfortunately only in his studies, and some unfinished works, that this fine capacity is clearly seen. His finished pictures, such as the *Last Testament of Isabella the Catholic*, lose nothing of their grand sobriety and skilfully handled space, but the freshness of the statement is dimmed by over-elaboration. Still, that the native dignity is there remains plain to see, and Rosales is likely to find a high place purely as a painter, when his skill as a story-teller becomes less of an obstacle to the superficial critic.

In the same way Francisco Pradilla Ortiz (*b.* 1848), a native, like Goya, of Zaragoza, achieved, on a huge scale, and in pictures crammed with careful detail, a largeness of conception and a simplicity of statement that take us straight back to Velazquez; in such pictures as his *Surrender of Granada*, frankly based in its composition on Velazquez' *Surrender of Breda*, and even more, in the great *Boabdil's farewell to Granada*, the poignant sentiment of the subject is never allowed to interfere with the breadth of design, or to divert attention from the singular felicity in the handling of space.

It would be possible to continue the list of Spanish historical painters to remarkable length, and indeed they are worthy, as a school, of greater attention than is often accorded them; but towards the middle of the century they became weakened in their national characteristic of largeness of design by the influence of Gérôme and, above all, of Meissonier, with results which can only be described as disastrous. It is the fashion to speak of Mariano Fortuny (1841–1874) as though he were the one notable Spanish painter of the latter half of the 19th century; and while it is true that a natural and ineradicable genius for colour, and a vigour and liveliness of action, redeemed him from triviality, the strong influence which Meissonier exercised upon him



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J. SOROLLA

After Bathing

was all to the bad. It is only necessary to contrast the appalling rococo exuberance of the *Spanish Marriage* or the *Selection of a Model*, and the fidgety elegance of *the Garden of the Poets*, with the rich quietude and superb design of the *Moorish Farriers*, to realize how very nearly the world lost a great artist. In the last-named picture the vigorous independence of the painter asserts itself. He allows himself to use his eyes, rather than his collection of clichés: and the result is a startling power of emphasizing, in contrast with the flickering impression of a group of poultry in the foreground, the sinewy strength of the glistening semi-nude figures which give the picture its name.

One might almost go so far as to say that foreign influence is invariably bad for Spanish painting; that, left to themselves, Spanish painters produce at least something distinctive and vigorous, but that the moment they depart from their own personal contact with observation of the world around them, they become stagey and trivial.

Moreover, Spanish art constantly reminds us of the heterogeneous character of the elements which go to make up modern Spain. The gaiety of the sunshine, the liveliness of movement in the work of Joaquin Bastida y Sorolla are those of his native Valencia; and the same liveliness, with a touch of Goya-like acerbity, is to be seen in the Valencian Hermengildo Anglada-Camarasa. Zuloaga and Gustavo de Maetzu are Basque painters, with the sombre Basque vigour that is almost brutality; and Fernando Alvarez de Sotomayor never loses, even in his most formal portraits, that touch of wistfulness, of depression, that is the heritage of his native Galicia, " the Ireland of Spain."

Sorolla brought new life into Spanish painting. His is not the impressionism of Paris, it is simply enjoyment of air and sky and sea, and of the play of light on moving bodies, set down without the intervention of thought or theory. True, it has design, and it has instinctive dignity; but these are the unconscious reflection of the artist's manner of seeing, not imposed upon, but growing out of his subject. A *Decorative Panel* exhibited in Venice in 1926 is merely a very realistic study of two peasants; the powerful angular

design of the folds of their cloaks is purely incidental. The broad drawing in flat masses of colour is merely a method, a means to an end. In his *Saliendo del Baño*, a nurse carrying a child from the sea, the harmony between the lines of the flying bathing-wrap and the curves of the waves is entirely natural and unforced. The picture could not be anything but Spanish, for it is just a thing seen, utterly literal in its transcription, and yet completely inevitable in the finality of its design.

José Mongrell, too, is Valencian at a glance, but lacking somewhat of the spontaneous freedom of Sorolla in his treatment of his very similar subjects. It is in the work of Anglada-Camarasa that Eastern Spain comes into its full expression, with colour now gorgeous, with dramatic contrasts of light and shade, as in the *Jovenes Valencianas* with its flaring embroideries and deep blue twilight sky, now boldly decorative, as in the *Campesinos de Gandia*, and again, delicate, elusive, and wholly subordinated to the intense emphasis upon dark eyes and scarlet lips, in *La Gata Rosa*—a *Maja Vestida* not so insolent but twice as seductive as Goya's.

Ignacio Zuloaga, though primarily a Basque in his outlook, is perhaps a more consciously Spanish painter than most. His study of Velazquez and Goya has been deliberate, and has influenced him both technically and in the choice of a point of view; there is, for example, a strong reminiscence of Velazquez in his period of the dwarfs, in *The Hermit*; and equally, Goya is recalled by the rather self-conscious verve of the portrait of La Señorita Souty, although there is none of Goya's bitterness. In his pictures of "Manolas"—the coster-girls of Madrid, we might call them, if there still existed coster-girls in England to afford the comparison—his enjoyment of raw colour and bold simplicity of design gets full scope, and his heavy impasto and rather garish palette are admirably suited to the theme.

More completely Basque, less sophisticated in their expression of their racial point of view, are the two Zubiaurre, Valentin and Ramon. The work of both is marked by an

uncompromising severity. It does not seem to aim at beauty so much as a kind of sad solemnity. In the portrait of the artist's wife, by Ramon de Zubiaurre, simplicity of pose, minuteness of modelling, and a background of distant landscape severely reduced to pattern in a manner reminiscent of the Umbrians of the Quattrocento, create a note of most impressive quietude; and the same atmosphere is produced by very different means in the work of Valentin de Zubiaurre. His *Pilgrimage*, with its arbitrary grouping of peasant figures against a landscape, the dominance of vertical lines—the white of tapers and of a standing figure of a man, against a confused and nebulous background of a distant town, has an air of silence, of the solemn performance of a rite, that comes out again in the *Departure of the Fishing Fleet*, with the reiterated theme of upraised arms, of upright oars and sails.

Most of all, perhaps, Gustavo de Maetzu translates into pigment and design this Basque quality of stillness. His colour is heavy: the masses of his design are set compactly together, and though, as in *Bout de Nuit*, there is a strongly stressed note of drama, it is not allowed to detract from the vigorous pattern of the painted surface. His landscape subjects are firmly fitted patterns of extreme contrasts of light and shade, and his portraits are set immovably in their place as parts of a design, without loss of vitality. Their animation is not suppressed, but suspended.

The Basque, however, has no painting history behind him; he is an interpreter of Spain rather than a Spaniard. When Spain speaks for herself, as in the work of José Guiterrez Solana, it is with a startlingly mediæval accent. This painter reveals unmistakably the fact that it is possible to produce a great art without the smallest regard for beauty, whether of design or colour, as an end in itself. He goes straight back to the fervid sincerity of the primitive painters of Spain who first sought to break the fetters of Flanders and Italy, and to speak for themselves in their own language. If we place side by side *La Dolorata* and the *Family Group* which were so displayed at Venice in 1928, we shall be startled to see how very little after all separates

that early art from the most modern essays in stark realism. Though the one picture is that of a statue-like figure of Our Lady of Sorrows with a foreground of half-length figures, whose faces all bear the same expression of absorbed fanaticism, and a background in which a religious procession winds, following the draped figure of the crucified Christ towards a piled-up mountain town, beneath a lowering sky, and the other is a group of commonplace people seated in a commonplace room, with a priest as the central figure, they are alike in their harsh reality, which is not mere realism ; they are alike in their awe-inspiring stillness and gloom; and these characteristics are no less present in his *Carnaval en la Aldea*, which, in spite of the grotesque and clumsy fancy of its rustic revellers, and the unsophisticated representation of its mountain-village setting, is gruesome rather than gay.

It is in vain that some of the younger painters, more especially in Madrid, seek, as Eugenio Hermoso, for example, seeks, to put a smiling face on Spain, and to soften her austerities. Even so suave and cultured a painter as Julio Moises, with his compelling portraits of gipsies, cannot wholly exorcise the note of sadness, nor shake the stillness, that are born in the soul of the people. For all his gaiety of colour and sympathetic rendering of individual character Fernando Alvarez de Sotomayor is not gay. The very lines of his composition fall into a quietude of design that is not so much restful as tired.

What is more, when a Spanish painter does succeed, as Antonio Ortiz Echagüe has succeeded, in shaking off this sombre element, that, except in Valencia, seems inherent in his art, he does not gain thereby. It is rather in such a picture as *Supersticion*—a group of peasants bringing offerings to a shrine—than in his brilliant but rather artificial portrait groups, painted for English and American patrons, that he is at his best. José Lopez Mezquita, though in expression his *Pilarcita* is gay enough, has kept the quietude which gives reality and relief to the smile, and additional force to the realistic beauty of modelling and texture of the bare shoulder emerging from

the dark shawl, and set against the airy expanse of quiet landscape background.

We must go back to Eastern Spain, to the work of Joan Junger, for gaiety. Here, light touches of colour, and figures slightly and summarily drawn, are rather absorbed into the pervading light than illuminated by it. That the influence of Matisse may have been at work in such a picture as *Bucolic, Mallorca*, is not improbable, but the influence is slight, and the work of this happy painter is but a logical development from that of Sorolla. Menino Andreu, too, has trifled with Fauvism, and a little with cubism, but has kept an exquisite purity of draftsmanship and—a rare quality in a Spaniard—a delicate imaginative faculty. If one can imagine a blend of Watteau and Giorgio di Chirico, it would be somewhat in the fashion of the work of Andreu.

It is, however, in the art of Timoteo Rubio, of Joaquin Sunyer, and, above all, of Daniel Vazquez Diaz, that the experiments of the last twenty years have found their Spanish adaptation to Spanish needs. Diaz is among the most important of the Spanish painters of to-day. In his penetrating analysis of character, biassed and merciless though it be, he stands almost alone among modern portrait painters. His *The Little Idol*, a picture of a mother with her baby in her arms, has expressed with a force that is all the more astonishing because it only reveals itself slowly, the jealous pride and savage protective instinct of the mother, which give the picture its title; and his portrait of His Majesty King Alfonso XIII, which seems to begin by being a caricature, ends by being a monument, colossal in its superb air of permanence. Immense power of design, a wonderful control of planes and masses, and impeccable, yet intensely individual drawing, are the means by which this remarkable painter invests his realism with a dignity which belongs to the rendering rather than to the reality.

Beside him may be placed a very interesting painter, José de Togores, who, if his work is to be traced to foreign sources at all, would seem to attach itself rather to Central Europe than to France, though it may be that again Matisse has influenced him in passing. Typical of his

work is the *Young Girl With a Basket*, which, while definitely neo-realistic in its simplicity of statement of fact, and in the studious restriction of brushwork to the narrowest limits, has no forced or artificial naïveté; for that he is a fine draftsman, with a very beautiful sense of modelling in colour, reminiscent of the earlier nudes of Renoir, may be seen in his nude study of a woman and a child, *The Beach*, a rhythmical handling of rounded forms in a high key of colour. Not at first very obviously Spanish, this painter seems likely to open out a new road for purely Spanish enterprise in painting.

This is not the place to speak of Picasso, whose work belongs rather to the history of French than of Spanish painting; but it is worth remark that when, on the one hand, Picasso paints pictures such as those of the "blue period"—*La Vie*, or the portrait of Madame Picasso—he arrives at precisely that atmosphere of stillness, of suspended thought, which characterizes all the greatest painting of Spain, and when, on the other hand, he makes his most recent experiments in the rendering of abstract form, he contrives to invest even these with an appearance, uncanny because it is inexplicable, of uncompromising reality.

So slight a sketch as this chapter must necessarily omit more than it includes. Its aim, and the aim of the whole of this book, has been to indicate the general trend of modern art both in its conscious "movements" and in its unconscious national and racial tendencies. It is to be hoped that it may be regarded as a historical, rather than as a critical essay, and historical only in the sense that it may serve as a starting-point for the specialized study of such aspects of modern painting as may seem especially interesting to the reader. No attempt has been made to trace the multifarious cross-influences working between one school and another, and, indeed, apart from the effect of French developments, at intervals throughout the century, upon the art mainly of England and America, it is rather the independence than the interdependence of national developments which seems to be established.

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EUGENIO HERMOSO

Rewards

It is for that reason that nothing has been written here with regard to the interesting but rather barren course of art in the Low Countries; for it can scarcely be said that the work of Josef Israels and the Maris has added anything to the glory of Holland, while the greatest Dutch painter of the 19th century, Jongkind, both had more influence in, and was more influenced by, France than his native country; and van Gogh finds neither place nor parallel in Holland. If we except Alfred Stevens the Belgian, James Ensor is the only Belgian who has added anything to the history of European painting, and it is not yet time to estimate the value of his contribution. To have attempted, in this small compass, to touch upon that most interesting development, the art of Scandinavia, would have been to court disaster; and we can only be uneasily conscious that there has been growing up beyond the Russian frontier, in the last few years, an art which owes so little to the known sources of painting in Europe, as to be virtually a new thing, to be studied from its inception, when the time comes, and to be judged by other than the established standards of criticism.

This is neither an explanation nor an apology, but merely a statement of fact. Art does not stand still. It reflects each new phase of history with relentless certainty; and the upheaval of the last twenty years or less has broken down obstacles and shattered boundaries, so that new streams are now flowing in new directions of which the course is scarcely yet traced. In Yugo-Slavia and in Bulgaria, and in Greece, these streams are taking colour from soil over which they have never flowed before. It is more than five hundred years since Venice first found painters in Dalmatia and made them into Venetians—men like Schiavone and Marco Basaiti, of Slav and Greek blood. What may happen now that the influence of the old schools is flowing outwards instead of drawing inwards, no one can foresee. If this little book helps any student at least to form an idea of the general aim of the art that has come down from the old European sources, that is the most that it can hope to do.

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